CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

JOHN ADAMS AND MERCY OTIS WARREN

RELATED TO THE
"HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION"

JULY—AUGUST, 1807

COLLECTIONS

OF THE

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

CENTENNIAL VOLUME.

Committee of Publication.

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.
RICHARD FROTHINGHAM.
WINSLOW WARREN.

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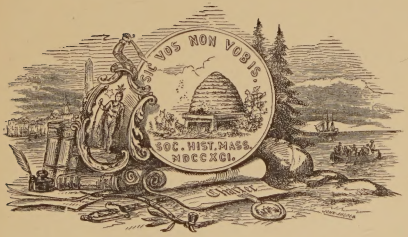

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

I. Heath Papers 1
II. Winthrop Papers 289
III. Warren Papers 317

PART III.

CORRESPONDENCE

BETWEEN

JOHN ADAMS AND MERCY WARREN

RELATING TO HER

"HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION,"

JULY—AUGUST, 1807.

CORRESPONDENCE.

No. 1.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, July 11, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — As it is neither consistent with my principles, disposition, or habits, upon any misunderstanding with an ancient friend, to conceive resentment and hastily to be changed into an enemy, I shall still continue my old style of address to Mrs. Warren.

I have read much, if not all your History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution.

I am not about to write a review of it. If I were to do this under an oath to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the commentary would certainly be at least twice as voluminous as the text. But, as in those passages which relate personally to me there are several mistakes, I propose at my leisure to point out some of them to you in the spirit of friendship, that you may have an opportunity in the same spirit to correct them for any future edition of the work, if you are convinced of the inaccuracy of the passages and judge it necessary or expedient to make any alteration. I shall observe no order in selecting the passages, but take them up as they occur by accident.

In the 392d page of the third volume, you say that "Mr. Adams, his passions and prejudices were sometimes too strong for his sagacity and judgment."

I will not, I cannot say that this is not true. But I can and will say, with the utmost sincerity, that I am not conscious of having ever in my life taken one public step or performed one public act from passion or prejudice, or from any other motive than the public good. If I had acted from passion or prejudice, from interest, ambition, or avarice, the public affairs of this country would have been in a much less prosperous condition than they are, and my private fortune, both in rank and property, much more enviable than it is. I therefore pray you, Madam, to particularize some of those instances in which it has appeared or been represented to you that my prejudices or passions were too strong for my sagacity and judgment, and I will undertake to vindicate or rather to justify myself to you, or, if I cannot do that, will make you the necessary concessions.

In the same page, you say that "Mr. Adams was sent to England with a view of negotiating a treaty of commerce; but the government too sore from the loss of the colonies, and the nation too much soured by the breach, nothing was done."

To form a just idea of this passage, it would be necessary to transcribe my commission and the plan of a treaty which was offered to Great Britain. A letter of credence to reside with a government and a commission to make a treaty are sometimes different instruments, and were made so by Congress in this instance. I was accredited as Minister Plenipotentiary, to reside at the Court of St. James. But, in the commission to make a treaty of commerce, Mr. Franklin and Mr. Jefferson were associated with me, and the project of a treaty was conformable to the judgment of a majority of the three Commissioners. Mr. Franklin could not come over to England; but Mr. Jefferson did, and was presented by me to the King as one of the commissioners, and united with me in presenting our project of a treaty to the Marquis of Carmarthen. This

project contained all those Articles relative to the total suppression of all privateers and prizes, and other Articles which you will find in our treaty with the old King of Prussia. These Articles were as congenial to my heart and feelings, and had the approbation of my judgment as sentiments of equity and humanity, as entirely as they had those of my colleagues. But I knew at that time, as certainly as I do now, that Britain would voluntarily burn her navy and her flag as soon as she would consent to them. Had I been alone in the commission, I should not have inserted them in the project, — not because I did not approve them as philosophical principles, but because I knew the only effect of them would be to disgust and alarm the government and the nation. No notice was ever taken by the British Ministry of these articles; but there is no doubt they had an unfavorable effect upon their minds. Their avowed and ostensible objection to a treaty was that the treaty of peace had not been executed, and the proofs which had been given to the world that Congress had neither power nor authority to bind the nation; for every State in the Union had passed laws in direct violation of the treaty of peace. You say I resided in England four or five years. I resided there from August, 1785, to the 19th of April, 1788, not three years; but this is an erratum of little consequence.

When you say that nothing was done, the error is of some weight. The truth is, a great deal was done, and will appear to the world, if ever my letters to Congress and their instructions to me, together with Lord Carmarthen's letters to me, should be published. Among other things, it will appear that every State in the Union was induced to repeal their laws which had been made against the treaty, though Virginia and some other Southern States continued to contravene it without law. As the whole transaction was a disgrace to our nation, I am apprehensive no historian will ever be found to record it.

But the most exceptionable passage as yet found in this page is: "Unfortunately for himself and his country, he became so enamoured with the British Constitution and the government, manners, and laws of the nation, that a partiality for monarchy appeared, which was inconsistent with his former professions of republicanism."

Every part and every sentiment in this paragraph, I affirm, upon my honor and my faith, is totally unfounded.

My opinion of the British Constitution was formed long before I had any thing to do in public life, more than twenty years before I ever saw the British Island. I learned from Fortescue, Smith, Montesquieu, Vattel, Acherley, Bacon, Bolingbroke, Sullivan, and Blackstone, and DeLolme, and even from Marchmont Needham, Algernon Sydney, James Harrington, and every other writer on government, and from all the examples I had ever read in history, from all I knew of the human heart and the rise, progress, and tendency of the passions in society, the information, opinion, and judgment I have ever formed of the British Constitution, long before the Stamp Act in 1764 and 1765. I also learned to admire that Constitution from Colonel Otis, your father, from James Otis, your brother, from Mr. Gridley, Mr. Thacher, and even from Samuel Adams and James Warren, and even from Mrs. Mercy Warren, his ingenious and amiable lady. Neither my judgment of that Constitution, nor my esteem of it, nor my affection for it, was increased or altered by my residence in England. My esteem for the manners of the English or the French was not certainly augmented by my residence among them.

If we may distinguish between manners and morals, I should certainly prefer the manners of the French and the morals of the English. But my esteem of neither was increased by a residence among them.

You say a partiality for monarchy appeared. This fact I deny, and entreat you to mention to me the evidence

which you supposed would warrant the assertion, that I may clear it up, or at least be heard in my defence.

I have never exhibited or entertained but one opinion of monarchy in any part of my life. Despotism, absolute monarchy, absolute aristocracy, and absolute democracy I have uniformly detested through my whole life; because I knew that absolute power was tyranny, delirious tyranny wherever it was placed. A mixed government is the only one that can preserve liberty. The limited, equipoised monarchy of England I have always thought the only government which could preserve civil, political, or religious liberty, or even the semblance of it, in any of the great populous, commercial, opulent, luxurious, and corrupted nations of Europe.

In America I have always thought that a mixed government was necessary. But by a mixed government in America I have never understood a government with an hereditary Executive or an hereditary Senate. Neither of these ever appeared to me to be necessary. But I have always advocated a mixed elective government in three branches, such as are the Constitutions of Massachusetts and New York, from which the Constitution of the United States is wholly borrowed. So far from manifesting a partiality for monarchy, I have always uniformly declared to my friends, whenever the subject has been seriously started in conversation, that if the people of America would unanimously confer on me the power of instituting a government for them, as the Athenians did on Solon, and the Lacedæmonians on Lycurgus, and I knew beforehand that they would quietly submit to whatever plan I should propose, I would not recommend to them either an hereditary king or an hereditary nobility, because I did not in my conscience believe it would be for their happiness, security, or prosperity. On the other hand, I have always reprobated and opposed a government that is a sovereignty in a single representative assembly, in opposition to Franklin,

Paine, Matlock, Young, Lieutenant-Governor Cushing, and even Samuel Adams as well as Mr. Turgot. In conformity with these views and principles, I wrote my letter to Mr. Wythe, and it was published in the beginning of the year 1776, under the title of "Thoughts on Government, in a Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend," in which a Legislature in three branches was recommended, and an independent Executive and Judiciary, and from which the Constitution of New York was taken.

In conformity with the same system, in the Convention of the Massachusetts, in 1779, I advocated a Legislative in three branches, with an Executive entirely independent, and even with a negative on all the laws, with an independent Judiciary, not only in the committee of thirty and in the sub-committee of three who appointed me to draw the Constitution, but after our report, in the Convention at large, before three or four hundred members from all parts of the State. I have never deceived the people, Mrs. Warren, nor any individual of them. I have never practised simulation nor dissimulation with my countrymen. My principles and opinions have always been as public as arguments before the most numerous popular assemblies, and even as dissemination from the press could make them; and they have always been uniformly the same in matters of government. No other professions of republicanism than these did I ever make, and these I have always made.

In page 394, you say in a note that "circumstances in some future day may render it necessary to adopt an hereditary monarchy in the United States." This is going the utmost length to which I have ever gone in any of my writings or conversation, though I could name to you men in high rank, power, and popularity with the present predominant party, who have gone much further, and asserted that the Constitution of the United States was defective in not having an hereditary Executive and Senate.

I can recollect but one circumstance which could give a color to the representation you have given of my monarchical sentiments, and that is this. Not long after my return from Europe, in a conversation between General Warren, yourself, and me, at my house, the Constitution of the United States was the topic. The General did not like it. You said you had a letter from Mrs. Macaulay, in which she said she thought it would do, for the foundation of it was democracy. "Poh!" said the General, "she does not understand it." I said I thought the Constitution an acquisition; and, after some slight observations on both sides, I said jocularly, laughing, in that style of familiarity which had been long habitual between us, "For my part, I want King, Lords, and Commons." I supposed that both of you perfectly understood me to mean, what alone I did mean, such a balance of power as the Constitution we had been talking of contained, which is a miniature resemblance of kings, lords, and commons, though without the names, and without the permanent quality of the two former. This, and no more, was my meaning; and it is certain that you understood me in this sense, and in this sense only, for you answered me as quick as lightning, laughing as I did, "And so do I too."

It was a very common saying at that time by some, in the sense in which you and I understood it, and used it. I can prove that Mr. Speaker Morton said that "no government was worth a damn but that of King, Lords, and Commons." Governor McKean has said seriously to me, that the Constitution of the United States was defective in not having an hereditary Executive and Senate; and I can prove that he said the same thing to others and even in open conversation at public tables, and held serious arguments to prove and support his opinion. Many others I could mention who now rank high in power, some of them even so far as to say that we ought to have a monarchy here in the person of one of the sons of the

King of England, — an idea I have always most cordially detested. If I were to measure out to others the treatment that has been meted to me, I could make wild work with some of your party. Shall I indulge in retaliation or not?

I shall proceed no farther at present, but expect with impatience your answer. In the mean time, I shall prepare more for your consideration. My regards to the General, and believe me still your friend, though with some grievances to complain of.

J. Adams.

Mrs. Mercy Warren.

No. 1.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

Plymouth, Mass., July 16, 1807.

John Adams, Esq., — After a long suspension of a friendly literary intercourse, it was very unexpected to me this day to receive a letter from Mr. Adams; nor can I conceive of any thing that should occasion a resentment in his bosom, or prevent his old style of address to Mrs. Warren, or give the semblance of an "old friend being hastily converted into an enemy," — much less could I have expected to have been charged with a want of veracity or a malignancy of heart by a gentleman who has long known me too well to suspect me wilfully guilty of either. Had not the irritation of the times or some other cause unknown to me have agitated his mind too much for the gentleman or the friend, I should not have received a letter couched in such terms as his of the 11th of July.

In the second paragraph of this letter, you say you have read much, if not all of my History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution. You pro-

ceed to say that you are "*not about to write a review;*" that, if you should, "*the commentary would be twice as voluminous as the text.*" But of this I think I am sure, that, were you to write with the same eye of candor and friendship with which you once viewed her compositions, the author might have little to fear from your strictures.

I have lived long enough to be sensible that such a work would be variously received by such a world, and in such times as those in which we live.

I have expected that this history must pass under the criticisms of great and little men; but conscious that I have uniformly endeavored to write with impartiality, to state facts correctly, and to draw characters with truth and candor, whether the friends or the foes of my country, or the enemies of myself and family, or of those connected by the dearest ties of nature and friendship, I have ventured to submit it to the ocean of public opinion. I think I feel a firmness of mind at my advanced period of life that will not be shaken by censure or elated with applause, my conscience bearing testimony that I have aimed at a just delineation of every fact and every character I have thought myself obliged to touch in the course of my narration.

You surely thought this a just standard of historic merit, when a letter now in my cabinet, dated March 15th, 1775, was written: you therein have observed that "the faithful historian delineates characters truly, let the censure fall where it will. The public is so interested in public characters that they have a right to know them, and it becomes the duty of every good citizen who happens to be acquainted with them to communicate his knowledge."

Having written under a strong sense of the moral obligation of truth, adhering strictly to its dictates according to the best of my information, which I endeavored to draw from the purest sources, I had determined on a uniform silence relative to any criticisms that might appear from

public scribblers, or the disquisitions and interrogatories of others in a more private character. How far I may be induced to depart from this resolution by your observations addressed directly to myself, I know not.

I have always been sensible of the difficulty and delicacy of drawing living characters. It is my opinion that the character of man is never finished until the last act of the drama is closed. There is therefore a variety of circumstances that may exhibit his opinions and his transactions in a varied point of view from what they have been in different portions of his life.

You say in your letter that you "have some grievances to complain of," and that justice has not been done you in my historic work. Of this I have never been sensible: what I have said relative to your character was read and revised and re-read, and I frequently wished for an opportunity to have submitted it even to your own eye, thinking that, under the pressure of abuse that you had received from your enemies, your mind might have been relieved by such a candid scrutiny of error and mistake to which all are liable.

You have requested me to "particularize some of those instances in which it has appeared or been represented to me [you] that Mr. Adams's passions and prejudices were sometimes too strong for his sagacity and judgment."

It is true that I have asserted that you were subject to passions and prejudices like other men: your warmest friends and acquaintance will never contradict this; nor do I think a natural irritability of temper any impeachment of character. Passions are sometimes the heavenly gales that waft us safely to port, at others the ungovernable gusts that blow us down the stream of absurdity. I have never charged you with prejudice or passion in the discharge of your functionary duties in public life. But, strongly impressed with the idea that from a firm republican you was become an advocate for monarchic govern-

ment in your own country, I was led to think that your prejudices were too strong for your sagacity and judgment, or you never could have expected that for a long time to come such a government could have been acceptable in America.

You have made a number of criticisms on my observations in page 392, Vol. III., relative to your residence in England, of your attachment to the British Constitution, of the number of worthy characters who taught you to love that Constitution, among whom you have done me the honor to place the name of Mrs. Warren, and have added that "neither your [my] judgment of that Constitution, nor your [my] esteem of it, nor your [my] affection for it, was increased or altered by your residence in England." Of this, I shall only say that that attachment was long felt by every American as well as yourself. The principles of that Constitution have been admired, but the deviations from them detested, and the corrupt practices and arbitrary systems of that Government are become abhorrent.

But as you say you are making preparations for further commentaries on the work you are reviewing, and have promised to do it "*in the spirit of friendship*," I shall waive a reply to what you are pleased to say of those whom you denominate my party, and leave you to indulge in retaliation or not. As I do not understand the drift of your question, I am not competent to reply. I shall subscribe myself, so long as you have the smallest title to that claim,

Your friend, M. Warren.

No. 2.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, July 20, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — In the 392d page of the third volume of your History, you say that "after Mr. Adams's return from England he was implicated by a large portion of his countrymen as having relinquished the Republican system and forgotten the principles of the American Revolution, which he had advocated for near twenty years."

I am somewhat at a loss for the meaning of the word "implicated" in this place. If it means suspected or accused or reproached, I know nothing of it. No man ever accused or reproached me with any such relinquishment or oblivion. My books had been received and read. The first volume had been published in three new editions of it, one in Boston, another at New York, and a third at Philadelphia, and propagated far and wide in all parts of the United States. It was put into the hands of the members of the Continental Convention at Philadelphia, then sitting for the formation of the Constitution in 1787, and almost in despair of ever agreeing upon any plan.

This book had such an effect upon the gentlemen that it united them in the system they adopted. Your friend Mr. Dickinson came out of the Convention, and said to Dr. Rush that he had been in despair of getting the Convention to agree at all, but Mr. Adams's book had diffused among the members such good principles, that now he had no doubt they should agree upon a good Constitution. Governor Martin, of North Carolina, and for six years a Senator of the United States, who had been a member of the Convention that formed the Constitution, told me that my "Defence" had produced the Constitution of the United States. Dr. Morse told me that he was informed from good authority that my "Defence" had

produced an entire revolution in the sentiments of the Convention, and influenced the members to agree to the Constitution that was adopted. I have learned the same fact from many other sources.

The general principles and system of that book were adopted by the writers of Publius or the Federalist, Mr. Jay, Mr. Madison, and Mr. Hamilton. My principles and opinions concerning forms of government were therefore certainly public enough: they were perfectly well known throughout the continent. Besides this, Dr. Jarvis, of Boston, was known publicly and openly to approve of that book, and he sent me message after message, that of all the politicians of the age he agreed most with me; and General Warren himself, in a letter he wrote me in London after he had perused the first volume of the "Defence," — which letter I shall produce on a proper occasion, for I have it at hand, — expressed his entire approbation of it, saying that there was nothing in it but what he entirely agreed in, excepting the negative upon the laws proposed to be given to the Governor, which he said, upon the whole, he had rather should be qualified, as it is in our Constitution, than absolute, as I proposed. Mr. Samuel Adams said to me more than once that he did not differ much from me in the sentiments in that book.

Now, Madam, I pray you to tell me who were the persons who composed that large portion of my countrymen who implicated me as having relinquished the Republican system? Was Mr. Dickinson, Dr. Jarvis, General Warren, Mr. Samuel Adams, or the Convention who framed the Constitution of the United States, among the number who composed that "large portion"? For a long time after my arrival in America, I heard but one voice concerning my book. George Bryant, of Pennsylvania, said or wrote that he believed the Convention that formed the National Constitution had been too much influenced by Mr. Adams's book; and this is all the slur that I remem-

ber to have heard or read upon that book till the election of Vice-President came on.

Mr. Hancock was ambitious of being President or Vice-President: I stood in his way. Hamilton was afraid of me; and General Knox, over whom Hamilton at that time had great influence, came to Boston with a view of promoting Hancock to the Vice-Presidency. I had been the friend of Knox from the time when he was a little boy in Deacon Henchman's Book and Stationery shop, and had done at least as much as any man in the world, and I believe much more, towards bringing him forward in life, and in the army.

But Hamilton had insinuated into him that I should not harmonize with Washington, and (would you believe it?) that "John Adams was a man of too much influence to be so near Washington." In this dark and insidious manner did this intriguer lay schemes in secret against me; and, like the worm at the root of the peach, did he labor for twelve years, underground and in darkness, to girdle the root, while all the axes of the Anti-federalists, Democrats, Jacobins, Virginia debtors to English merchants, and French hirelings, chopping as they were for the whole time at the trunk, could not fell the tree. Knox, however, after spending some time in Boston, and conversing with all sides, found he was upon a wrong scent, and that Mr. Hancock could not be carried; and, indeed, he was convinced that he ought not to be, and was decided in my favor, though he had previously gone so far with Mr. Hancock himself that he was under embarrassment about declaring it openly. All this, however, never made any alteration in my friendship for Knox, nor in his for me, to the day of his death, which did not happen till he had been supplanted by Hamilton, as many others were.

From this time, some of Mr. Hancock's intimates began to insinuate in secret whispers prejudices and calumnies

against me. But at first nothing was said about my monarchical principles nor my attachment to England; but they reported that I was stingy and avaricious. It was two or three years, I believe, before I heard any thing of monarchy or England. The very first time I heard any thing like it was from Samuel Adams, who told me that General Warren had said that "John Adams had been corrupted by his residence in England." Astonished as I was, I said nothing. But I remembered a letter from General Warren which I had received in England, which I still preserve, and will produce, if necessary, in which he said, "Samuel Adams has become, contrary to all his former principles and professions, the most arbitrary man in the State." I had learned from all quarters the dissensions between Samuel Adams and General Warren at and before Shays's Rebellion; and therefore I attributed these peevish ebullitions from both to their mutual rancor, and took great care to conceal from each of them what the other had said. In truth, I could not believe that General Warren had said that I had been corrupted. I never could think it possible till I read your History, in which I found many things quite as extraordinary. Corrupted! On what ground? On what color did he venture this assertion and expression? Was it my book? That is impossible, for he had fully approved it under his hand. Besides, I will forfeit my life, if there is one thought in that or any other of my public writings which by a fair construction can be interpreted against the purest morality, or inconsistent with the principles and the system which I have always professed. Corrupted! Madam, what provocation, what evidence, what misrepresentation could he have received that could prompt him to utter this execrable calumny? Corruption is a charge that I cannot and will not bear. I challenge the whole human race, and angels and devils too, to produce an instance of it from my cradle to this hour. But what am I to infer

from this conduct of General Warren, if Sam Adams's assertion is true?

What, indeed, am I to conclude from your History? Shall I infer from both that General Warren and his lady were the first propagators of the stories which were spread through the Union before the election of Mr. Jefferson, and which were fully believed by the ignorant German boors in Pennsylvania, and by many of the ignorant voters in all the Southern States, — that John Adams had married his daughter in England to the Prince of Wales, and his son John Quincy Adams to the Princess Royal of England, and had entered into a treaty with King George to make his son-in-law king of North America? Or am I to attribute to the Warren family the honor that was done me in the back parts of Pennsylvania and in Kentucky, of being hanged in effigy by the side of Mr. Jay, with a purse of English guineas in my hand? There was nothing worse in all this than there was in General Warren's assertion, if he uttered it.

Corruption! Madam, I shall not very easily or very soon quit this topic; and I have a right to demand of you, and of General Warren, too, a more explicit acknowledgment of my uncorrupted integrity than any you have made in your History. Both of you well knew that promotion to a very respectable and lucrative office under the Crown was offered me by Governor Bernard, by the advice of Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson, and that I not only declined, but was so long urged to accept it, that I was at last reduced to the necessity of positively refusing it. And you knew that my refusal was owing to my resolution not to be led into the temptation of corruption. You knew that from 1760 and 1761 I had invariably adhered to the cause of my country, and to all its friends, in opposition to every mortification that government and its friends could throw in my way; that I had been always employed in the most perplexing and embarrass-

ing, and at the same time the most unprofitable, causes in behalf of the Whigs. You knew that my integrity was always acknowledged both by Tories and Whigs. You knew that I had abandoned the head of a lucrative profession, in which I had the first practice for seven years, and went to Congress to serve my country for twelve shillings a day; and you knew that I had abandoned my wife and children, whom I loved more than my own life, and lived ten years in a state of separation from them, at the call and in the service of my country. You knew that I had crossed the Atlantic Ocean three times, and run the gauntlet through successions of British men-of-war, at a time when the spirit of the British government was so high, and the passions of the nation so exasperated, that I had every reason to apprehend, if they once had me in their power, they would make of me an example of their vengeance by executing upon me their punishment of treason in all its horrors. You knew that I had undertaken all these hazards, after your philosophical friend Jefferson had not dared to accept them. You knew that not one lisp or hint of suspicion of my integrity had ever crossed the Atlantic from Europe, either from friends or enemies, either in France, England, or Holland, where I had resided as an Ambassador ten years, and done a vast deal of business, and been engaged in perpetual intercourse and conversation with all sorts of people, from the highest ranks to all the middle ranks, if not to the lowest; and I presume to say you never heard my integrity impeached from that side the water. I would not hesitate to appeal to all Europe, and am confident you would not find one man or woman who would question my integrity in any transaction of mine abroad, public or private.

Provoked as I am, I will say I believe you would find many more of the opinion of the Chevalier de la Luzerne, though they might not approve of his expression. In company one day with members of Congress, of whom

our friend Mr. Gerry was one, the conversation turned upon me, and one of the gentlemen asked the Chevalier whether he thought Mr. John Adams might not be corrupted. The Chevalier answered, "One might as well attempt to corrupt Jesus Christ." If there is any indecency or blasphemy in this expression, it is not my fault. It shocked me when I heard it, and I never should have committed it to writing if your History had never been printed. Mr. Gerry is my author, and of him you may inquire. So much for my "corruption in England and relinquishment of the Republican system."

Now for my having "forgotten the principles of the American Revolution, which I [he] had advocated for near twenty years." Here a wide field is opened, indeed. We must inquire what were the principles of the American Revolution; whether Mr. Adams had advocated all of them; which of them he had ever advocated, and which of them he had advocated for near twenty years; whether he had forgotten all of them; if not, which of them he had forgotten.

The principles of the American Revolution may be said to have been as various as the thirteen States that went through it, and in some sense almost as diversified as the individuals who acted in it. In some few principles, or perhaps in one single principle, they all united.

I will give you, Madam, as succinct an analysis of the principles of the Revolution which I embraced and advocated as I can.

1. The first principle of the American Independence and Revolution that I ever embraced, advocated, or entertained, was, *Defence against the French.*

As I still take great delight in writing to Mrs. Warren, whatever grief, resentment, or indignation I may justly feel, I shall indulge myself in a little ramble with her. In the year 1745, and before and after that time I heard and read a great deal about the expedition to Cape Breton,

and the projected expeditions against Canada. I heard a great deal about the enterprise and valor of our people, not only in these military enterprises, but in the Indian wars of Standish, Church, Lovell, and others. I heard a number of old men who had been a *soldiering*, as they expressed it, in their youth, at the Westward, at Number Four, and at the Eastward, relate their dangers, escapes, combats, and enterprises.

From all these and many other sources, my little noddle had conceived a very high opinion of the integrity, enterprise, patience, and perseverance of my countrymen, so that I had not the smallest doubt but our people would cut to pieces at once the Duke D'Enville's army, if they should dare to land at Boston or on any other part of our shores.

In the same years, I heard great complaints of the English, of their neglect to defend us and assist us, and a thousand murmurings about cowardice and treachery, and some apprehensions that the English would forsake us or sell us to France. This war, however, went over; and my mind was much at ease about public affairs till 1754 and 1755. Then the French were making encroachments, and Shirley was appointed the great negotiator to the court of France; and soon after, with a French wife, he was made Commander-in-Chief of the military force in America. During this time, our affairs went so ill that I had great apprehensions that the French would overrun us. When Lord Loudon succeeded, his conduct was so ridiculous that I could not help thinking we could do better without England than with her; and I seriously wished she would leave us to ourselves, and send us no more of their Generals. So great was my confidence in the resolution of my countrymen, that I had no doubt we could defend ourselves against the French, and that better without England than with her.

In the course of that war, I heard such relations from

our provincial officers of the treatment they received from the regulars as made my blood boil in my veins. Brigadier Ruggles with his whole brigade, and my friend Gardiner Chandler as one of his Colonels, was put under the direction of a British ensign, and employed to cut roads, when they were much more willing, and I believed much more able, to fight the French, than the British officers and soldiers who treated them so cavalierly.

As early as this, I thought seriously of American independence; and, if the conduct of Britain was not altered, I thought I should wish for it. Here, then, I say that *defence against the French* was my first Principle of revolution. But Wolfe and Amherst succeeded, affairs went well, and all my reveries about independence vanished.

2. But they were not allowed to sleep long. As early as 1760, orders came to Paxton and Cockle to demand Writs of Assistance to break open houses, cellars, shops, and ships, to search for uncustomed goods. Judge Sewall died: Hutchinson was appointed Chief Justice on purpose, as I believed, to give judgment in favor of these writs.

I heard your brother James Otis, and Mr. Thacher, in the Council Chamber before the Superior Court in February, 1761, against the legality of these writs, and Mr. Gridley, in their favor; took minutes of the argument, made a short sketch of a report of it, which was afterwards surreptitiously printed, though garbled, and has got into Judge Minot's History. This cause opened to my view a nearer prospect of a revolution than I had ever seen before. I saw a haughty, powerful nation, who held us in great contempt, bent upon extending the authority of Parliament over our purses and all our internal concerns as well as external. I saw, on the other hand, the people of America cordially and conscientiously averse to these pretensions, and such was my opinion of their resolution that I believed they would oppose them to the last extremity. I saw no possible way in which these opposite

opinions and determinations could be reconciled, and therefore concluded the controversy would be long continued, productive in time of a civil war, and ultimately terminate in a separation of the Colonies from the mother country. My second principle of revolution therefore, Madam, was *the justice and necessity of resisting the claims of Parliament of authority to impose internal taxes on the colonists, and to regulate their internal policy.*

3. In 1764 and 1765, Parliament had proceeded so far as to pass the Stamp Act, which was a more explicit avowal and a more complete exemplification of their claim and determination to impose internal taxes, and to govern our domestic affairs. In opposition to this Act, I employed all the means I possessed, in conversation and in writing, to animate the people. I published those papers in the "Boston Gazette," which were soon reprinted in London, under the title of a Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law, which, however inconsiderable they may now be very justly esteemed, had at that time a greater influence and effect among the people than many other writings of older and abler men, and of much greater merit. I called together the ancient, large, and populous town of Braintree, and procured an unanimous vote for those instructions to their representatives which were long known by the name of the Braintree Instructions. When the General Court met, the members produced their instructions; and I was informed forty towns were found to have adopted the Braintree Instructions *verbatim.*

The town of Boston, whose instructions were drawn by Mr. Samuel Adams, had, in the main essential point of all, adopted the sentiment and the very expressions of my instructions. And even the town of Plymouth, whose instructions were drawn by General Warren, had borrowed the same injunction and the same expressions. In the counties of Plymouth and Barnstable, where I had considerable business, and whose courts, especially in Ply-

mouth, I attended four or five times a year, I was instant, in season and out of season, in explaining to the people the nature of the claims which were set up against them, and in exciting them to opposition to the last extremity. This course I continued till 1774, when I was sent to Congress. This was so notorious to all parties that Southworth Howland used to say that, though none of his customers paid him better than Mr. Adams, yet he would cheerfully give him entertainment at his house for the assistance Mr. Adams gave him in his exertions to procure the election from year to year of his friend Colonel Warren. The same conduct I invariably held in the counties of Bristol, Worcester, Middlesex, Essex, York, Cumberland, and Lincoln, as well as Suffolk, and even in Duke's County, in all of which I had practice more or less. When the question came forward whether the courts of justice should proceed without stamped papers, I exerted myself to the utmost in all the counties, especially in Suffolk and Plymouth, to unite the bar in an unanimous resolution to urge the courts to proceed. In Plymouth it was no easy task. You know who were judges and who were lawyers at that time. Mr. Hovey, Mr. Clap, and Mr. Little of Scituate, and Mr. Johnson of Bridgewater, and Mr. Stockbridge of Hanover, you know were not very well affected, any more than the judges, to our cause or our connections. Yet, Mr. Robert Treat Paine cordially and zealously joining me, we called a meeting of the bar, and succeeded in obtaining an unanimous consent. Yet, Madam, notwithstanding all this and much more, you are pleased to insinuate in your History that I did not come forward till the first Congress in 1774. However, more of this hereafter. You see here that my third principle of revolution was, *the necessity of resistance to the Stamp Act.*

4. The Stamp Act was repealed, but the claim of Parliament was not relinquished. It was soon followed by other acts laying duties on tea, paints, &c., and, what was worse,

by a declaratory act asserting the unlimited authority of Parliament over us in all cases whatsoever. I became instantly as decisive and determined, and as industrious too, in opposition to these acts, as I ever had been to the Stamp Act. But, as I am not writing a history, I shall not enter into details. My fourth principle of revolution may be called, *the necessity of resistance to the Tea Act and the Declaratory Act.*

5. The country had been filled with rumors of designs of King, Ministry, or Parliament, or all together, to introduce into America, Bishops, Deans, and in short an English hierarchy. A great house, at that time thought to be a splendid palace, was built by Mr. Apthorp at Cambridge, and was supposed to be intended for the residence of the first Royal or Parliamentary Bishop. Although I had not a wish to restrain the liberty of conscience of any man or any denomination, I thought this innovation, if admitted, would be a complete surrender of the privileges of our charter, an entire concession of the authority of Parliament to legislate in our internal concerns. And, besides this, that only the most needy and perhaps vicious of the English clergy would be sent here, and become an ecclesiastical establishment, wholly under the influence of the ministry; increase the patronage of the Crown, become a political machine to establish the unlimited authority of Parliament, and introduce a flood of corruption in morals as well as politics. You may then set down for my fifth principle of revolution, the necessity of resisting the introduction of a Royal or Parliamentary establishment of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

6. When Mr. Hutchinson's letters recommending an abridgment of English liberties, and Mr. Oliver's proposing a kind of nobility to be erected and established in America by Royal or Parliamentary authority, were brought to light, I thought this measure would annihilate all our privileges by charter, and establish the sover-

eign authority of Parliament in all our internal concerns. I entered therefore with zeal into an opposition to this scheme. And my sixth principle of revolution may be called, *the necessity of resisting the introduction of a Royal or Parliamentary nobility or aristocracy into the country.*

7. When an Act of Parliament was passed, authorizing the king to grant salaries to our Massachusetts judges; when the king had granted, and the judges, at least the Chief Justice, accepted them, I was more alarmed and aroused than ever I had been. This was laying the axe directly at the root of every thing that was dear to us. It was not only an annihilation of our charter, an establishment of the absolute sovereignty of Parliament, but it was a subjection of the lives and fortunes of us all to such judges as would for ever be the blind and corrupted tools of the British ministry.

In opposition to this measure, I wrote and published eight letters to General Brattle, which first turned the attention of the American people to this important subject, and diffused through the continent just principles and sentiments which have remained to this day, and I hope will remain to the end of time. The Massachusetts Legislature of the last year have done themselves great honor by remembering and respecting them.

Again, the people were astonished and confounded, knowing not what to do, nor how it was possible for them to escape from the snare. I am bold to say that I first put them upon the only measure which could relieve them, and which not only relieved them from dependent judges, but from dependence on Great Britain. I could name to you the house and the company in which I was asked by Dr. Winthrop and Dr. Cooper my opinion whether there was any possible remedy for us. My answer was, Yes. The question was instantly urged, What can it be? My answer was, "*An impeachment of the judges by the House*

of Representatives, before the Governor and Council." The company all agreed that this idea had never been before suggested; and they started twenty objections at once. We had no power of impeachment. The Governor and Council would not hear the impeachment, &c., &c. I referred to the powers and privileges of the charter, and the general doctrine and practice of impeachments of the Commons before the Lords in the Parliament of England, where the Commons were the grand inquest of the nation; that this power was considered as the highest power of the Commons, and the most essential to preserve the liberties of the nation and the balance of the Constitution. This conversation was forthwith spread among the members of the House. Major Hawley came to me directly to interrogate me about it; asked me many questions, and started many difficulties. I turned to the passages in the charter, and made him read them and consider them. I turned to Mr. Selden's "Judicature in Parliament," and made him read it, and several other law books in which the subject is treated, and pointed to the volumes of the State Trials in which he might read all the impeachments that had ever been tried in England, if he pleased. Mr. Robert Treat Paine came to me in the same perplexity, having heard that I had publicly given such an opinion; and I gave him the same reasons in support of it. I did the same to several other members. Major Hawley was determined to know the sentiments of others. He went to Cambridge and visited Judge Trowbridge, made the Judge read over with him the passages in the charter which I had read to him and made him read; mentioned the authority of Selden which he had read in my office, and some impeachments in the State Trials to which I had referred him. The Judge told him that he could not see how the charter or the authorities could be evaded. Impeachments were the rights of Englishmen! We were entitled to all those rights, and therefore must be to this.

The Judge related this to me afterwards, and said he "saw I was determined to explore every resource in the Constitution to support my cause." The Tories considered this impeachment as the hinge on which the independence of America turned. When the impeachment was prepared in the committee, Major Hawley, without whom nothing could be done in the House, would not take a step without me; insisted on my meeting with the committee, which I did at my own house till twelve or one o'clock at night. I have been informed by an ear-witness that Chief Justice Oliver, in England, since the independence of America was acknowledged by Great Britain, has said that John Adams was the author of that impeachment, and consequently the author of independence, as he said; and expressed much ill-humor against me in consequence of it.

Notwithstanding this, Mrs. Warren, you are pleased in your History to say I first came forward in 1774. I need not detail to you the consequences of that impeachment in all the counties of the State. My seventh principle of revolution, therefore, may be set down as, *the necessity of the independence of the judges.*

8. Governor Hutchinson, in a speech to the General Court, undertook to demonstrate to all the world the supreme, absolute, unlimited sovereignty of the British Parliament over the Colonies in all cases whatsoever. The House of Representatives undertook to answer him. But Mr. Hancock, Mr. Cushing, Mr. Samuel Adams, Colonel James Warren, and all their particular connections in the House, could carry no point in the House upon any legal or constitutional question without the concurrence of Major Hawley; and Major Hawley would agree to nothing till he had consulted John Adams, and made the committee consult him too.

He accordingly insisted that I should be invited to meet with the committee, and give my opinion and reasons upon every question. I was accordingly invited, and in

such urgent terms that I could not in common civility refuse to comply. I met with the committee accordingly.

A draught had been prepared for them, made as I then supposed by Mr. Samuel Adams; but I have since heard it was by Dr. Joseph Warren. It was very prettily written, but filled with that silly democratical nonsense which at that time, and ever since, has poisoned so many of our newspapers, and produced such a black catalogue of horrors in the French Revolution. . . . I reasoned, I pleaded, I declaimed with the committee till I convinced them of the many errors, and induced them to expunge them; and, instead of them, introduced that discussion from legal and constitutional authorities which was adopted by the committee, and with astonishing unanimity in the House, and which convinced the whole people of North America, and the whole scientific world, that by law and constitution Parliament had no authority over us in any case whatsoever. My eighth principle of revolution was, *the necessity of denying in theory, upon all legal and constitutional grounds, the authority of Parliament over us in any case whatsoever.*

9. But while we continued connected with Great Britain, which we all of us still wished, it appeared to me necessary that we should voluntarily consent that Parliament should regulate the trade of the empire. I accordingly always contended for this point, and was never opposed in it by any of my associates. Afterwards, in Congress, we found this the most difficult point to manage; and I drew up the article respecting it in the Bill of Rights of 1774, which was finally acquiesced in unanimously. My ninth principle of revolution, then, was to allow Great Britain the power of regulating our external trade.

10. But all these reasonings, discussions, and concessions availed us nothing. The British King, Ministry, Parliament, and Nation would pay no regard to any thing.

If you will please, Madam, to look into the journal of the first Congress in 1774, in the month of September and the 7th day of the month, you will find that Congress appointed two committees, — one to state the rights of the Colonies, and another to state the violations of those rights. You will also find that I was upon the first committee. And I will now inform you of what does not appear on the journal. After ample discussions in the committee at large, consisting of two members from each Colony, a sub-committee was appointed to prepare a draught of a report. I was one of this sub-committee, in which the whole ground was reviewed and all the points deliberately re-examined, and after this I was appointed alone to draw up the result. From these facts, it may, I presume, without any *pride of talent*, be fairly inferred that, in the opinion of Congress, the general committee, and the sub-committee, I understood the subject, and was likely to express the sense of the continent as exactly as any of them. I accordingly drew the report, which was accepted, first by the sub-committee, then by the general committee, and last of all by Congress.

The Declaration and Resolves you will find in the same volume, page 27, on Friday, October 14, 1774. They contain all the solid principles which nearly two years afterwards were inserted in the Declaration of Independence. In these Resolves, you will find many of my principles of revolution, particularly the fifth and sixth, which were at that time principles of every member of Congress and of the whole continent.

The fifth Resolve is, "That the respective Colonies are entitled to the *common law of England*, and more especially to the great and inestimable privilege of being tried by their peers of the vicinage, according to the course of that law." The sixth Resolve is, "That they are entitled to the benefit of such of the English statutes as existed at the time of their colonization, and which they have by

experience respectively found to be applicable to their several local and other circumstances."

The tenth Resolve is, "*It is indispensably necessary to good government*, and rendered essential by the English Constitution, that the *constituent branches* of the Legislature be independent of each other."

The tenth principle of revolution embraced by me was, *the necessity of preserving the common law, the useful statutes, and the independence of the constituent branches of the Legislature.* This principle, or rather these three principles, I have heartily embraced and strenuously defended for more than fifty years, without one moment's doubt of the truth, utility, or necessity of them. Who then, Madam, has forgotten the principles of the Revolution?

11. When, after fifteen years' exertion of all my faculties, and the faculties of all my friends, to bring the English nation to hearken to reason and respect justice, on the 19th of April, 1775, I found hostilities commenced, and the blood of our citizens barbarously spilt, I concluded what I had long foreseen,—that we must resist in arms the whole force of the British empire. I thought it weak, pusillanimous, and dangerous to resist by halves. I went to Congress, prepared to seize every British officer in America, and hold him as a hostage for the security of the people of Boston, then imprisoned in the town, and all other persons who might have the misfortune to fall into British hands; to recommend to the people of all the States immediately to institute governments by their own original power, and authorize Congress to declare the States independent, and then enter into negotiations with England concerning terms of peace, but in the mean time to exert all the force of the continent to resist the British forces by sea and land. This system I advocated with the members of Congress, in the House and out of doors, and more than half that body were of my mind,

till Mr. Dickinson, aided by the Quakers and proprietary gentlemen of Pennsylvania, prevailed on Mr. John Rutledge, of South Carolina, to depart from his first opinion and go over to the other side, and he carried with him a majority in Congress.

My eleventh principle of revolution, then, may be called, *a total but temporary independence, without any foreign connections, to be surrendered again by treaty, in case safety and liberty and peace could be obtained upon honorable terms.*

12. When our petition failed a second time, and I found we must go through a long war, I thought it folly to hesitate any longer, and a total separation of the two countries for ever was become necessary and inevitable. I accordingly exerted all the talents I had, feeble as they were, both in doors and out, to prevail on Congress to recommend to the States to institute governments, to declare the country independent, and to seek commercial connections, not entangling alliances, with foreign powers. I thought our country fully adequate to the contest with Britain, without embarrassing ourselves with future European wars. I thought that our commerce was reward enough to allure France, Spain, and Holland to countenance and befriend us; and I knew that France and Spain then dreaded the naval power of the United British Empire to such a degree that I thought it impossible they should let slip the opportunity of striking one pistol at least out of the hand of an enemy who constantly threatened them with two.

My twelfth principle of revolution, then, was *independence, absolute and perpetual, not only of England, but of France, Spain, Holland, and all other nations of the earth.*

Others entangled us with France, not I, the whole history of which I could detail; but it is not necessary here.

Independence was declared; Congress recommended to the States to set up governments; treaties of commerce and friendship were offered to foreign powers. In short, the Revolution was complete and perfect. And these were my principles, and no other. During all this time, no form of government had been recommended to any State, nor had any confederation or national constitution been adopted by Congress.

It was not until October and November, 1777, more than a year after the Declaration of Independence and the perfect accomplishment of the Revolution, that Congress deliberated seriously on the articles of the confederation, though a report of their committee had laid some time on their table. I was present through all these debates, and took a share in them; but the system adopted was so poor, so superficial, so ill digested a thing that I had no satisfaction in it, and more than once declared to Congress in my place that it could govern none of the States, that it could not hold the American people together, and that it would not exist ten years. Two years passed away after Congress recommended it, before the States adopted it in 1781, and it lived only to 1789.

But in this confederation there was no recommendation of any particular form of government to the separate States. An hereditary monarchy and nobility might have been erected by every State in the Union, if they had pleased; so might an absolute monarchy, or even a despotism; so might a simple democracy, a simple aristocracy, a simple monarchy, or any mixture of all of them. No State, no man, was pledged to adopt or advocate any form of government whatever. The States accordingly did as they pleased, and there was a great variety in the plans they did adopt. Pennsylvania adopted her *man-trap;* for it deserved the name of that insidious instrument of punishment and cruelty, much more than that of a free Republican government. Accordingly, the partisans of it

assumed the name of Constitutionalists, and gave or left the name of Republicans to their antagonists. Vermont and Georgia were *left* to imitate and adopt this miserable abortion, which fell dead almost from its birth. Virginia, the two Carolinas, and Maryland all erected different governments. Massachusetts erected none till 1780, four years after the Revolution terminated. During these four years, we continued to govern according to a Royal British Charter. Connecticut and Rhode Island have done the same to this day, full thirty-one years after the end of the Revolution. New Hampshire contrived a few variations from Massachusetts; so did New Jersey from New York and Pennsylvania both. I say again that resistance to innovation and the unlimited claims of Parliament, and not any particular new form of government, was the object of the Revolution. We all acknowledged the right of the people to frame their own governments, and we knew they would not think of any other than Republican governments. The most of us, and myself among the rest, neither wished or thought of introducing any other; nor have I wished for any other to this moment.

We were not unanimous, however. Mr. Nelson, afterwards Governor of Virginia, and a favorite of the people, and really a very worthy man, declared to Congress in his place that he should vote for independence, because he knew it was the sense of his constituents, but that he was against it in his own private judgment, because he knew the people would institute Republican governments, and for his part he acknowledged that he *dreaded and abhorred Republican governments*.

The first appearance of a national stipulation in favor of Republican government was in the Constitution of the United States, in which a Republican constitution was guaranteed to the several States. It may perhaps be a sufficient recommendation of this article to say that it was introduced by Mr. Charles Pinckney, of South Carolina;

and he ought to have the glory of it. But I confess I never understood it, and I believe no other man ever did or ever will. A Republican government is a government of more than one. The word Republic has been used, it is true, by learned men, to signify every actual and every possible government among men, — that of Constantinople as well as that of Geneva. But the most accurate writers distinguish republics from despotisms and simple monarchies, and call every government by that name in which more than one person is concerned in the sovereignty; and in this sense the kingdoms of Sparta, Poland, and England were republics as truly as San Marino. Venice, Holland, and other States were universally called Republics both by the learned and unlearned; yet the people in these States had certainly no more liberty than those of England or France. The most accurate distinction, then, has been between free republics and republics which are not free. It is not even said in our Constitution that the people shall be guaranteed in a free republican government. The word is so loose and indefinite that successive predominant factions will put glosses and constructions upon it as different as light and darkness; and if ever there should be a civil war, which Heaven forbid, the conquering General in all his triumphs may establish a military despotism, and yet call it a constitutional republic, as Napoleon has already set him the example. The only effect of it that I could ever see is to deceive the people; and this practice my heart abhors, my head disapproves, and my tongue and my pen have ever avoided. I am no Pharisee, Jesuit, or Macchiavelian.

Now, Madam, in the name of justice, truth, friendship, and honor, I demand of you to show me when and where and how I have relinquished the Republican system, and what principle of the American Revolution I have forgotten?

The grave and solemn philosophical reflections which

follow in this and in page 393 are calculated to give more formality and a more aggravated character to the gloomy defamation in the paragraphs I have been confuting.

I am very sorry, Madam, you have laid me under the necessity of fatiguing you with these tedious letters. But, as I have begun, I must pursue the subject to the end. It will not be long before you will receive another letter from your injured friend,

J. Adams.

Mrs. Mercy Warren.

No. 3.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

Quincy, July 27, 1807.

Dear Madam, — In the 131st and 132d page of the first volume of your History, you are pleased to say that John Adams, one of the negatived councillors, a barrister at law, of rising abilities, his appearance on the theatre of politics commenced at this period; that is, in 1774.

This is of very little importance, and would not be worthy of much attention, if it did not betray a malignity of heart and a disposition to lessen me as much as you could in the opinion of your readers, both in present and future times, which runs through your whole History, and is grossly inconsistent with all the former *principles and professions* both of yourself and your husband, from the year 1761, as all his and your letters abundantly testify. These letters are not lost.

A man never looks so silly as when he is talking or writing concerning himself; but Mrs. Warren's severity has reduced me to the necessity of pouring out all myself as plain as downright Shippen or as old Montaigne. Does Mrs. Warren consider the House of Representatives as the only theatre of politics? Were not the courts of justice at that time, both superior and inferior, theatres of poli-

tics? Were not the Courts of Admiralty, general and special, theatres of politics? Were not the towns and their meetings theatres of politics? Were not the presses theatres of politics? Was not the Council Chamber, with the Governor and Council sitting in it, a theatre of politics? Was not every fireside, indeed, a theatre of politics?

If Mrs. Warren considered the House of Representatives as the only theatre of politics, she ought to have remembered that I was chosen and acted as representative for the town of Boston, in the year 1770, four years before she allows me to have appeared on the theatre; and she ought to have remembered, too, that I drew up the political papers, and conducted the controversy with the Governor in that year. She ought to have remembered, too, that I was chosen into his Majesty's Council in 1773, and negatived by Governor Hutchinson; and again in 1774, and negatived by Governor Gage. Mrs. Warren might have remembered that I made the only report of her brother's argument in the great question of writs of assistance in 1761, which would have been forgotten, but is now recorded in history as the first appearance of a controversy which terminated only with the American Revolution. I was sworn at the bar in Boston in 1758; and from that time I became intimately acquainted with your brother and Mr. Thacher, both of whom treated me to the hour of their deaths like a brother more than like a son. In 1761, I was sworn and admitted as a barrister; and, as this was the year in which writs of assistance and symptoms of revolution made their first appearance in the world, I took so decided and so active a part on the side of my country that I will venture to say that your brother and Mr. Thacher, too, considered me, as long as they lived, one of the most confidential friends they had upon earth.

Mrs. Warren, too, might have remembered my public writings. These no doubt will now appear mean. They

always appeared so to me. But, mean as they were, they had their effects. Indeed, all the political writings of those times appear of little consequence at this day. Mr. Dickinson's Farmer's Letters, Mr. Otis's writings, and even those of Dr. Mayhew, have lost their interest, though they were then enthusiastically admired. Some of my poor scribbles were not only felt here, but were remarked by the friends of America in England. They were reprinted there in various forms, and excited so much curiosity among the friends of liberty that Mrs. Macaulay wrote to the daughter of Mr. Prince, a very learned lady in Boston, to inquire who was the writer of them. Mr. Hollis wrote to Dr. Elliot to make the same inquiry. Both of them inquired and answered. I was chosen, too, a member of the Society of the Bill of Rights; and Mr. Burgh sent me a present of his three volumes of Political Disquisitions. In 1772 and 1773, or in 1773 and 1774, two years, I am not certain which, I draughted the instructions to their representatives for the town of Boston, which you will find in the "Gazette" of those years, and were then considered as important State papers. She might have recalled the Braintree instructions too. A barrister at law, travelling with the circuits into all the counties of the State, and there was not one county in it in which I had not appeared and practised; conversant with all sorts of people, clients, parties, witnesses, grand jurors, petit jurors, as well as justices and judges, whose sentiments were well known to all parties; constantly arguing in public and private in favor of the public cause, and who was always heard with attention, — could not fail of being universally known and having extensive influence. You may judge of the opinion of our opponents by a saying of Chief Justice Oliver, at Plymouth.

This magistrate always made of his charge to the grand jury a vehement harangue upon politics. Highly complimented one day by his friends on the profound wisdom

and irresistible eloquence of his speech, and upon the great impression it had made on the people, he answered, "Ah! notwithstanding all that, Mr. John Adams has nothing to do but to go upon *the green* among the people, and say it is all equivocal and evasive, to destroy the whole effect of it."

This same Chief Justice Oliver, who loved me no better than Mr. Otis, used to say long before I was a representative, when he heard any one speak in admiration of your brother's great talents at the bar, that there was another gentleman at the bar of the same political principles, Mr. J. Adams, who was much better read in law than Otis, and a more agreeable speaker. Your brother Otis has often said, in Boston and Barnstable, I know, and in Plymouth, I believe, many years before I was a Representative, that John Adams would one day be the greatest man in North America. These were all extravagant hyperboles, but they serve to show that I was not an obscure person from 1761 to 1774. In 1765, I was chosen by the town of Boston, though not an inhabitant, together with Mr. Gridley and Mr. Otis, to appear before the Governor and Council, in favor of an order to the courts of justice to proceed in business without stamped papers. Mrs. Warren might have remembered, too, that Deacon Foster was a formidable rival to General Warren from his first election to the General Court, and that I was an active and zealous electioneering friend every year.

Add to this that in 1775 I was appointed Chief Justice of the State by the *unanimous* vote of that Council, which held the executive power as well as a branch in the Legislature. Your honored father, Colonel Otis, and that very Doctor Winthrop whose character you have so highly and so justly distinguished with honor, and Judge Seaver, of Kingston, your venerable brother-in-law, were members of that body. Such characters as these would not have ventured to intrust the most important office in the State

to any man who had not been long known to the body of the people, and fully confided in for his inflexible attachment to the public cause, as well as for his integrity and qualifications to discharge its duties.

All these little anecdotes, you will say, are proofs of my "pride of talent." Be it so: make the most you can of them, Mrs. Warren. But we shall have more to say concerning this pride of talent. They serve at least to prove that I ought to have been considered in your History as a figure on the stage from 1761 to 1774, call it the figure of a doorkeeper, a livery servant, a dancer, a singer, or a harlequin, if you will; but I ought not to have been shoved off the theatre and kept behind the screen for fourteen years. This is surely more than enough, Madam, on this trifling subject. I conclude then as yet your

Old friend and servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN.

No. 2.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, MASS., July 28, 1807.

JOHN ADAMS, Esq.

SIR, — Before I had an opportunity to forward my reply to yours of July 11th, I received another letter under date July 20th, containing twenty pages, in which so many demands are made and so many threats denounced that a total silence might be construed dismay.

My thread of existence in this evanescent state is too far spent for me again to enter on political discussion; yet I think it my duty to observe upon this letter, so far as is necessary to vindicate my own veracity, and to confute the unfounded charges contained therein, and repel the assertions that my pen has been guided by a malignant heart.

You have observed in your letter of July 11th that "*in the spirit of friendship*" you shall select passages "relative to yourself, without attending to order, but take them up as they occur by accident." I perhaps may do the same thing, yet wish to be a little more methodical; therefore, I advert to the first time I have mentioned you in my historic work. You have grievously complained that you have been so long neglected, and that your appearance on the theatre of politics was not recorded until the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four. Perhaps it would not have been done so early, had it not been for the extraordinary exigencies of the times, when I thought it would be an honor to Mr. Adams or any other man to be mentioned on the list of Governor Gage's negatived councillors. In this list, the names of Governor Bowdoin, Doctor Winthrop, Colonel Otis, and Mr. John Adams, were particularly designated as "distinguished for their attachment to the ancient Constitution, and their decided opposition to the present ministerial measures."

In the page complained of, 131, Vol. I., it may be observed there are only four lines relative to Mr. Bowdoin, seven to Dr. Winthrop, one to Colonel Otis, and four to John Adams, Esq. It may be noticed there is only one line of my own father at this period, and no more than nine throughout the whole work, though his abilities, his firmness, and his long services to his country were universally acknowledged. He had been a councillor for many years, and was very eminent as a professional man, as a patriot, and as a Christian, yet is only incidentally and concisely mentioned by his daughter, as have been many other gentlemen without any charges of partiality or malignancy.

I am so much at a loss for the meaning of very many of your paragraphs, and the rambling manner in which your angry and indigested letters are written, that I scarcely know where to begin my remarks.

I never had a wish to enter into a discussion of your motives of action while President of the United States, nor to give a particular detail of an Administration that rendered you unpopular indeed. This may be done by some one of that large majority of the people whose suffrages removed you from Presidential rank and placed another in the chair. I have frequently vindicated you as acting with honest intentions, however you might have been mistaken, or have varied from some gentlemen possessed of equal abilities, honor, and honesty, with yourself. Had not Mr. Adams been suffering under suspicions that his fame had not been sufficiently attended to, or that his character was not invulnerable, he would not have put such a perverse construction on every passage where he is named in a work in which the author aimed to do him complete justice.

A striking instance of this appears when you say, "The grave and solemn philosophical reflections in this and page 393, Vol. III., are calculated to give more formality and a more aggravated character to the gloomy defamation in several paragraphs." My soul shrinks from such a charge. The solemn or philosophical reflections annexed to the paragraphs where his change of sentiment has been mentioned were designed to throw a charitable veil over the general weakness of human nature, and to extenuate Mr. Adams's conduct where the writer thought political errors and deviations had been apparent.

I shall, however, answer such parts of your letter, notwithstanding its prolixity, in a manner that may or ought to restore your tranquillity. If it does not, it will exculpate me from the imputation of "falsehood or malignancy."

You complain that I have asserted that a partiality for monarchy appeared in your conduct. This fact you deny, and entreat me to bring forward the evidences which I suppose will warrant the assertion.

The assertion was not founded on vague rumor, nor was it the result of any scattered and dubious expressions

through your Defence of the American Constitutions that might warrant such a suspicion, but from my own judgment and observation soon after your return from Europe in the year 1788. There certainly was then an observable alteration in your whole deportment and conversation. Many of your best friends saw, felt, and regretted it.

If time has not weakened your memory, you will recollect many instances of it yourself. I will remind you of a few. Do you not remember an interview at Cambridge soon after your return from England, when his lady and myself met you walking up to Mr. Gerry's? We stopped the carriage, and informed you that Mrs. Gerry and myself were engaged to take tea with Madam Winthrop. You returned and took tea with us at the house of that excellent lady. You will remember that Mr. Gerry's carriage was sent for me in the edge of the evening. You took a seat with me, and returned to Mr. Gerry's. Do you not recollect, sir, that in the course of conversation on the way you replied thus to something that I had observed? —

"It does not signify, Mrs. Warren, to talk much of the virtue of Americans. We are like all other people, and shall do like other nations, where all well-regulated governments are monarchic." I well remember my own reply, — "that a limited monarchy might be the best government, but that it would be long before Americans would be reconciled to the idea of a king."

Do you not recollect that, a very short time after this, Mr. Warren and myself made you a visit at Braintree? The previous conversation, in the evening, I do not so distinctly remember; but in the morning, at breakfast at your own table, the conversation on the subject of monarchy was resumed. Your ideas appeared to be favorable to monarchy, and to an order of nobility in your own country. Mr. Warren replied, "I am thankful that I am a plebeian." You answered: "No, sir: you are one of the

nobles. There has been a national aristocracy here ever since the country was settled, — your family at Plymouth, Mrs. Warren's at Barnstable, and many others in very many places that have kept up a distinction similar to nobility." This conversation subsided by a little mirth.

Do you not remember that, after breakfast, you and Mr. Warren stood up by the window, and conversed on the situation of the country, on the Southern States, and some principal characters there? You, with a degree of passion, exclaimed, "They must have a master;" and added, by a stamp with your foot, "By God, they shall have a master." In the course of the same evening, you observed that you "wished to see a monarchy in this country, and an hereditary one too." To this you say I replied as quick as lightning, "And so do I too." If I did, which I do not remember, it must have been with some additional stroke which rendered it a sarcasm. You added with a considerable degree of emotion that you hated frequent elections, that they were the ruin of the morals of the people, that when a youth you had seen more iniquity practised at a town meeting for the purpose of electing officers, than you had ever seen in any of the courts in Europe.

Those conversations were not disseminated by me, — we were too much hurt by the apparent change of sentiment and manner: they were concealed in our own bosoms until time should develope the result of such a change in such a man. Is not the above sufficient to warrant every thing that I have said relative to your monarchic opinions? Had you recollected the conversations alluded to above, you would not have asserted on your faith and honor that every sentiment in a paragraph you refer to is "totally unfounded."

On your return from Europe, it was generally thought that you looked coldly on your Republican friends and their families, and that you united yourself with the party

in Congress who were favorers of monarchy; that the old Tories, denominating themselves Federalists, gathered round you. And did not your administration while in the Presidential chair evince that you had no aversion to the usages of monarchic governments? Sedition, stamp, and alien laws, a standing army, house and land taxes, and loans of money at an enormous interest, were alarming symptoms in the American Republic. Your removal from the chair by the free suffrages of a majority of the people of the United States sufficiently evinces that I was not mistaken when I asserted that "a large portion" of the inhabitants of America from New Hampshire to Georgia viewed your political opinions in the same point of light in which I have exhibited them, and considered their liberties in imminent danger, without an immediate change of the Chief Magistrate. However, I never supposed that you had a wish to submit again to the monarchy of Great Britain, or to become subjugated to any foreign sovereign. An American monarchy with an American Character at its head would, doubtless, have been more pleasing to yourself. The veracity of an historian is his strongest base; and I am sure I have recorded nothing but what I thought I had the highest reason to believe. If I have been mistaken, I shall be forgiven; and, if there are errors, they will be candidly viewed by liberal-minded and generous readers.

If you have a copy, as doubtless you have, I advise you to re-peruse the fourth and fifth pages of your letter of July 20th, when I think, in a cooler moment, you will be ashamed of the very angry and virulent expressions, poured with the rapidity of a cataract, against Mr. Warren, myself, and my family. You there say that Mr. Warren in a conversation with Mr. Samuel Adams once charged you with corruption. If he did, which I very much doubt, he did not charge you as being corrupted by British gold. But, if he thought the pure principles of republicanism were contaminated in your breast, it is not strange that a man of his integrity and

uniformity should regret it, and express in any manner he thought proper his surprise at so unexpected a change. When you say, "Corruption is a charge that you cannot and will not bear," Mr. Warren is not shaken by your angry epithets or vindictive resolutions. Your ebullitions of passion may pass by without disturbing his tranquillity.

But why is Mrs. Warren so indecently attacked? You ask her, in this petulant page, what you are to think of her History? I answer by asking another question, which it has been said is common among New Englanders, — What is Mrs. Warren to think of your comments? I readily tell you: she thinks them the most captious, malignant, irrelevant compositions that have ever been seen among criticisms, from Zoilus to the Sage of Mount Wollaston. If you can infer from a history so impartially and candidly written, that myself or my family have been the propagators of all the ridiculous stuff you mention previous to Mr. Jefferson's election, I believe you are the only man in the United States that would draw such an absurd conclusion.

You have asked, "Am I to attribute to the Warren family the honor that was done me, in the back parts of Pennsylvania and in Kentucky, of being hanged in effigy by the side of Mr. Jay, with a purse of English guineas in my hand?" Be assured, sir, the Warren family have said or done little about you for many years, and I believe have generally observed a great degree of delicacy when they have occasionally thought it necessary to mention your name; nor did they ever hear of the royal alliances of your children, the stories of the German boors or the burning in effigy, until you detailed them in not a very *polite letter* to Mrs. Warren.

There is a long list of items in your letter of July 27th, just come to hand, which you say Mrs. Warren ought to have remembered. I do remember your writings previous

to the year 1774, as well as those of Dr. Mayhew, Mr. Dickinson, and Mr. Otis, all of which had a happy effect in our country, and will never be forgotten, though no historian may take them up in detail. I do remember my first acquaintance with you, which commenced a short time previous to the Stamp Act. I do remember an increasing regard and esteem of myself and my husband towards a young gentleman who appeared to be warmly attached to the rights of America, and well qualified to assist in bringing forward her independence, if necessity should impel the effort. But I do not remember that my brother James Otis ever predicted, as you assert he did, that "John Adams would one day be the greatest man in North America."

But I well remember the critical period when your friends at the Plymouth fireside, where you have spent many a pleasant hour, first named and brought you forward as a suitable character for a councillor. The project succeeded to our wishes, and Dr. Winthrop and yourself came in together through the influence of a *friend*, — a friend who was very sensible of your capacity and abilities for rendering service to your country, but among his many respectable acquaintance of that day he had not anticipated, nor do I believe that any of them had, that "Mr. Adams would one day be the greatest man in North America."

The frequent negative of men of merit by the royal Governors Hutchinson and Gage, and yourself marked among them, led me to think it a proper period to introduce you as then on a public theatre which would exhibit to the world the most important and interesting events.

But I do not remember that ever Mr. Warren stood in need of your assistance to promote his popularity against Deacon Foster or any other man. There was not a man who more generally possessed the confidence of the people of the Massachusetts for very many years than Mr.

Warren; nor is there one in the United States who has been more uniform in his conduct and more faithful to the interests of his country than this gentleman, whose long services are recollected with gratitude by most of his cotemporaries.

You also remind me of the long and friendly correspondence that subsisted between us for many years. I well remember the warm and affectionate expressions of regard on account of your talents, patriotism, and friendship at that time. These letters, you observe, are not lost. I have never been ashamed of them: neither are your former letters lost; nor do I intend your more recent ones shall ever be lost; they shall be safely deposited for future use, if occasion shall require it.

I have attended to several of the grievances complained of in the long and laborious letter before me, and have noticed some unimportant things in a letter which immediately followed; but I must be excused from entering on a discussion of your principles of the American Revolution, or whether you have or have not ever appeared to "have relinquished" the Republican system. This subject comprises fourteen pages of yours, and as I can see no pleasure or benefit in dwelling on such a theme, or following a thread spun out to such a length, it shall not at present be attempted by

MERCY WARREN.

No. 4.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, July 28, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — In the 135th page of your second volume, you state that in 1778 Mr. John Adams, of the State of Massachusetts, was chosen to succeed Mr. Deane as commissioner in behalf of the United States at the

Court of France; an inaccuracy, however, of so little importance that it was scarcely worth a correction.

In the 139th page, you say that within a few months after Congress made a new arrangement of ministers, and Mr. Adams had been sent on in the room of Mr. Deane, both Mr. Adams and Mr. Lee were directed to repair immediately to America, and Dr. Franklin was appointed sole minister at the Court of France. My Commission is dated November 27, 1777. Your information, Madam, is incorrect. Dr. Franklin was, indeed, in little more than a year afterwards, appointed sole minister at the Court of France. But neither Mr. Adams nor Mr. Lee was directed to repair to America. Mr. Lee had a Commission to the Court of Spain, which still remained in force; and therefore, so far from being directed to return, he could not return without a breach of duty. He had still negotiations to carry on with the Spanish Court, and possessed the means of subsistence at least in his own hands, for Spain had advanced him a sum of money.

Mr. Adams was left in an awkward situation. He was neither directed to return to America nor to stay in Europe; nor was he furnished with the means of subsistence, nor even with those of bearing his expenses of a journey to a seaport or paying for his passage home in a merchant ship. The cause of this neglect was the division in Congress, which made it almost impossible to do any thing or pass any vote in their foreign affairs. If I had been directed home, as Mrs. Warren affirms, and a passage offered me in the "Alliance" frigate, and provision made for my very moderate necessary expenses in the journey and voyage, my mind would have been in paradise. I had no reason to complain of the annihilation of my Commission, and the appointment of Dr. Franklin alone; for I had previously recommended both these measures, and they had been adopted by my advice, as the following letter will show.

I had not been two months in France before the disputes between the two American parties became so well known to me, and their violence had arisen to such rancor, that whatever was done or said by Dr. Franklin, or by me when I agreed with him in opinion, was censured and often misrepresented by one party, and whatever was done or said by Mr. Izzard, Mr. Lee, and by me when I thought they were in the right, was at least equally censured and misrepresented by the other.

I was so thoroughly disgusted with the service, and so fully convinced that our whole system was wrong, and that ruin to our affairs abroad and great danger and confusion in those at home must be the consequence of it, that I thought it my indispensable duty to represent my ideas in America. To Congress I had no justification to write but in conjunction with my colleagues. It was impossible that we could agree in any thing. I therefore determined to write to a confidential friend in Congress, who I knew would communicate it to others, who might make such use of it as the public good might require.

I accordingly wrote to Mr. Samuel Adams as follows: —

Passy, May 21, 1778.

My dear Sir, — I have never yet paid my respects to you since my arrival in Europe, for which seeming neglect of duty the total novelty of the scenes about me, and the incessant avocations of business and ceremony and pleasure (for this last I find in Europe makes an essential part of both the other two), must plead my excuse.

The situation of the general affairs of Europe is still critical and of dubious tendency. It is still uncertain whether there will be war between the Turks and Russians, between the Emperor and the King of Prussia, and indeed between England and France, in the opinion of many people. My own conjecture, however, is that a war will commence, and that soon.

Before this reaches you, you will be informed that a strong squadron of thirteen capital ships and several frigates has sailed from Toulon, and that another squadron is ordered to sail from Spithead. Whatever I may have heard of the destination of the first, I am not at liberty to mention it. We have yet no intelligence that the latter has sailed.

Chatham the great is no more; but there is so much of his wild spirit in his last speech yet left in the nation, that I have no doubt but Administration will put all to the hazard.

We are happy to hear by the frigate "La Sensible," which has returned to Brest, that the Treaty arrived safe at Casco Bay. We hope to have the earliest intelligence of the ratification of it. The commissioners from England, who sailed about the 22d of April, will meet, as we suppose, with nothing but ridicule.

Prussia is yet upon the reserve concerning America, or rather, forgetting his promise, has determined not to acknowledge our independence at present. His reason is obvious. He wants the aid of those very German Princes who are most subservient to Great Britain, who have furnished her with troops to carry on the war against us, and therefore he does not choose to offend them by an alliance with us at present.

Spain is on the reserve, too; but there is not the least doubt entertained here of her intentions to support America. In Holland, there is more friendship for us than I was aware before I came here. At least, they will take no part against us.

Our affairs in this kingdom I find in a state of confusion and darkness that surprises me. Prodigious sums of money have been expended, and large sums are yet due; but there are no books of accounts, or any documents from whence I have been able to learn what the United States have received as an equivalent.

There is one subject which lies heavily on my mind, and that is the expense of the commissioners. You have three commissioners at this court, each of whom lives at an expense of at least three thousand pounds sterling a year, — I fear at a greater expense. Few men in this world are capable of living at a less expense than I am, but I find the other gentlemen have expended from three to four thousands a year each, and one of them from five to six; and, by all the inquiries I have been able to make, I cannot find any article of expense which can be retrenched.

The truth is, in my humble opinion, our system is wrong in many particulars. 1. In having three commissioners at this court. One, in the character of envoy, is enough. At present, each of the three is considered in the character of a public minister, a minister plenipotentiary, which lays him under an absolute necessity of living up to that character, whereas one alone would be obliged to no greater expense, and would be quite sufficient for all the business of a public minister. 2. In leaving the salaries of these ministers at an uncertainty. You will never be able to obtain a satisfactory account of the public moneys while this system continues. It is a temptation to live at too great an expense, and gentlemen will feel an aversion to demanding a rigorous account. 3. In blending the business of a public minister with that of a commercial agent. The businesses of various departments are by this means so blended, and the public and private expenses so confounded with each other, that I am sure no satisfaction can ever be given to the public of the disposition of their interests; and I am very confident that jealousies and suspicions will hereafter arise against the characters of gentlemen who may perhaps have acted with perfect integrity and the fairest intentions for the public good.

My idea is this: Separate the offices of public ministers

from those of commercial agents. Recall, or send to some other courts, all the public ministers but one at this court. Determine, with precision, the sum that shall be allowed to the remaining one for his expenses and for his salary, — *i. e.*, for his time, risk, trouble, &c.; and, when this is done, see that he receives no more than his allowance.

The inconveniences arising from the multiplicity of ministers and the complication of businesses are infinite.

Remember me, with the most tender affections, to my worthy colleagues, and to all others to whom you know they are due.

I am your friend and servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

The Honorable SAMUEL ADAMS.

This letter was received by Mr. Adams in due season, and by him communicated to Mr. Richard Henry Lee and others. Mr. R. H. Lee wrote immediately to me that he had seen it, and was entirely of my opinion.

It was communicated to so many members of Congress that it produced the revolution which followed; my friends and the friends of Mr. Arthur Lee uniting with those of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Deane and Mr. Izard in introducing the new plan.

The representation in my letter of the expenses of the commissioners related only to the state of things before my arrival. My expenses were very trifling. I had no house rent to pay separate from Dr. Franklin. I kept no carriage, and used none but that of Dr. Franklin, and then only when he had no use for it. I had very little company more than Dr. Franklin would have had, if I had not been there. But, before my arrival, Mr. Deane had his house and furniture and establishment of servants, as well as his carriage, in Paris, and another establishment for his apartments in the country, at Passy, and another

carriage, set of horses, and servants, besides his libertine expenses. Mr. Lee had a house, furniture, carriage, and organization of servants, at Chaillot. Dr. Franklin had his in the Basse Court de Monsieur Le Ray de Chaumont, the ancient Hôtel de Valentinois, — at what rent I never could discover, because Mr. Chaumont would never tell; but, from the magnificence of the place, it was universally expected to be enormously high. Making the best estimate I could from the representations that were made to me, I wrote as I then believed. But after a longer residence, more experience, and further inquiry, I was convinced that I had admitted much exaggeration into the account. Nevertheless, the expenses of Mr. Deane never have been known, and I presume never can be known.

From these papers, Madam, you will see that Americans may easily investigate the necessity, not of the sudden recall of Mr. Adams and Mr. Lee, for they were not recalled, but of the change of the plan of our affairs abroad, and Mr. Franklin's appointment as sole minister.

In page 140 of the 2d volume, you say that "Mr. Adams returned rather disgusted at the early revocation of his Commission, and the unexpected order thus speedily to leave the Court of France." But you see, Madam, that the revocation of his Commission had been solicited by himself, was fully expected by him, and did not, indeed, arrive so soon as he expected it. The order to leave the Court of France never arrived at all. The truth is, it was not the intention of Congress that he should return. Mr. Samuel Adams and others told me it was the intention to send me to Holland, and that nobody had the least idea that I would return till I heard farther from Congress.

I had taken pains to persuade my colleagues to take a house in Paris, and have but one establishment for us all.

Mr. Lee, whose opinion was that we ought to live in Paris, readily consented; but Dr. Franklin refused. I then proposed that Mr. Lee should take apartments with us at Passy, and there was room enough for us all; and I offered to resign my apartments to him, and take others which were unoccupied and not so convenient. But Mr. Lee refused to live with us, unless it were in Paris, where the Americans in general, and the French too, seemed to think we ought to live. All my proposals were therefore abortive.

Before I wrote the letter to Mr. Adams I had many things to consider. What would be the consequence if my plan should be adopted? Dr. Franklin's reputation was so high in America, in the court and nation of France, and all over Europe, that he would undoubtedly, as he ought to, be left alone at the Court of Versailles. Mr. Lee held two Commissions, one to the Court of France and one to the Court of Spain. If that to the Court of Versailles should be annulled, the other to the Court of Madrid would remain in force. The new plan would therefore make little odds to him. I had but one, and that to the Court of Versailles. If this was annulled, what would become of me? There was but one country to which I thought it possible that Congress might send a minister at that time, and that was Holland. But there was no hope that Holland would then receive a minister, and I thought Congress ought not to send one there as yet. I thought therefore that there was no alternative for me but to return to America; and I very deliberately determined that I had rather run the gauntlet again through all the British men-of-war in the Bay of Biscay, the British Channel, and the Gulf Stream, with all their storms and calms, than remain where I was under a system and in circumstances so ruinous to the American cause. I expected, however, that Congress would make some provision for my return, by giving me orders to receive money enough for my expenses, and

give me a passage in a frigate, if any one should be in France. In these last expectations only, I was disappointed. If I ever expressed any disgust, it was at this disappointment, and not at being recalled; for I was not recalled, and if I had been I should have rejoiced at it. Even this disgust was removed, when I had opportunity to converse with members of Congress, who explained the mystery to me. I might express disgust at another thing. When my family and baggage were all on board the "Alliance," below Painbœuf, in Nantes River, ready to sail the next morning for America, my frigate was impressed into the service of John Paul Jones, and I was left to wander on the sea-coast of France, like a ghost on the banks of the Styx, for three or four months, waiting for a passage in a French frigate. This, however, was not the fault of Congress. It was an intrigue. Whether the motives to it were justifiable, or excusable, or laudable, or otherwise, I shall not say at present. Who were the persons concerned in it, and how they conducted it, are questions which might fill many pages, which may one day be written, but not here. As the public service of the United States and of the King of France was the pretext, and in part, I believed, the real object, I acquiesced, however painful my personal disappointment was.

You are pleased to add, Madam, that I retired privately to my seat in Braintree, where I employed myself in preparing a concise statement of the situation and political connections of the powers of Europe, which I laid before Congress, &c. And for this and several other things you refer to a letter of mine to Congress, dated Aug. 4, 1779.

I arrived in Boston Harbor on August the 3d; on the next day the letter is dated. I could not employ myself long, therefore, in preparing this statement after my arrival.

But the fact is that the materials of that letter had been

collected in Europe and on the passage, and committed to writing before my arrival, and sent off to Congress on the day of the date. My time, therefore, during the interval between my arrival on the 3d of August and my departure for Europe the second time, — which was, I think, on the 19th of November, — was not employed in preparing that letter, but in something of much more importance. A few days before my arrival, my fellow-citizens of the town of Braintree, expecting me home every day, had elected me a member of the Convention which was then called to institute a Constitution of Government for the State of Massachusetts Bay, instead of that Royal Charter under which we had conducted all public affairs to that time. Upon my arrival, I found myself a member of the Convention; and the duties of this office, in reading over my old books upon government, in constant attendance in the Convention and committees, and in drawing up all the papers, — the Bill of Rights as well as the Frame of Government, — and in daily and hourly debates both in the House and in committee, in vindication of my own opinions against a multitude of motions, schemes, and plans urged in opposition to them, I found full employment for my time without "repairing to Congress." I sent on my accounts, which were soon approved and settled by an honorable vote. I sent on all the information I thought necessary or proper to be communicated; and, among the rest, a copy of all the letters of the commissioners, written in my time, all of which, excepting two, had been written by my own hand. My "pride in the Gallican alliance" and my "zeal for supporting it" and all "the expressions" of it are still preserved in my letters, all of which, public and private, are at the service of the public whenever the public voice shall call for them in print. It is not correct, however, to talk of my "zeal for the alliance" without restrictions and explanations. As the treaty was made and the public faith of my country

solemnly pledged, no man was more decidedly zealous for fulfilling it in every article. But articles had been admitted into it which I never approved, and had always opposed in Congress from first to last. My invariable maxim has been, from the beginning to this day, friendship and commerce with all nations, but entangling alliances with none except in the last extremity of necessity; and no man knows this better than Mr. Jefferson.

It is very true that I advised Congress and everybody else in America to guard against principles and manners inconsistent with our government. And have I ever given other advice? Who, Madam, has introduced an inundation of atheism, deism, annihilation, gambling, contempt of marriage and the Sabbath? Is it I? Who has disseminated Paine, Barlow, Boulanger, the System of Nature, &c., into the darkest corners of the obscurest villages in our country? Is it I?

There is an insinuation in the note in this page. "This was under the despotism of kings. It was monarchic principles and manners that Mr. Adams then admonished his countrymen to avoid." The insinuation here seems to be twofold. First, that since France became a republic, the manners and principles have been better; or, secondly, that Mr. Adams had since become better reconciled to monarchical principles and manners. The first is contrary to the most notorious fact; for the principles and manners of France have been ten times worse since the abolition of the royal authority than they were before. The second insinuation, if it was intended, is as false as the first; for my opinion of monarchical principles and manners is the same it was in 1779, had been for twenty years before, and has been ever since, — viz., that the principles were indispensable and the manners unavoidable, because incurable, in the great nations of Europe, but wholly inadmissible in America. When you proceed to say, Madam, that "Mr. Adams continued in this retired

and *mortified* situation for some months," I am astonished at the spirit that guided your pen. With how much apparent delight do you insert that word "mortified"! Instead of being retired, I was in public forming a Constitution of Government for my country, which I have since spent a great part of my life in "defending." If Solon and Lycurgus were retired when they did the same for theirs, I may be said to have been retired. Instead of being mortified, it was the proudest period of my whole life. I made a Constitution for Massachusetts which finally made the Constitution of the United States. Still in hopes, Madam, that you will do me justice, I subscribe,

As usual, your injured friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN.

No. 5.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, July 30, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — Had I really been disgusted and mortified at my treatment by Congress, which in fact I was not, but was satisfied as soon as it was explained to me, the mortification would have been more than compensated by the Commissions I received on the 4th of November, 1779, unquestionably the most confidential Commissions that Congress had ever issued. The Commission to General Washington as Commander-in-Chief of the army was far inferior to them both in confidence and importance and in danger and difficulty. The first constituted me sole Minister Plenipotentiary to negotiate and conclude a peace with Great Britain; the second, to negotiate a treaty of commerce with that power. The first Commission was in these words: —

"The Delegates of the United States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia,

"To all who shall see these presents, send greeting. It being probable that a negotiation will soon be commenced for putting an end to the hostilities between his most Christian Majesty and these United States on the one part and his Britannic Majesty on the other part, and it being the sincere desire of the United States that they may be terminated by a peace founded on such solid and equitable principles as reasonably to promise a permanency of the blessings of tranquillity, Know ye, therefore, that we, confiding in the integrity, prudence, and ability of the Honorable John Adams, Esquire, late Commissioner of the United States of America at the Court of Versailles, late Delegate in Congress from the State of Massachusetts Bay, and Chief Justice of the said State, have nominated and constituted and by these presents do nominate and constitute him the said John Adams our Minister Plenipotentiary, giving him full power, general and special, to act in that quality, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the ambassadors or plenipotentiaries of his most Christian Majesty and of his Britannic Majesty and those of any other princes or states whom it may concern, vested with equal powers, relating to the re-establishment of peace and friendship, and whatever shall be so agreed and concluded for us and in our name to sign, and thereupon make a treaty or treaties, and to transact every thing that may be necessary for completing, securing, and strengthening the great work of pacification in as ample form and with the same effect as if we were personally present and acted therein, hereby promising in good faith that we will accept, ratify, fulfil, and execute whatever shall be agreed, concluded, and signed by our said Minister Plenipotentiary,

and that we will never act nor suffer any person to act contrary to the same in the whole or in any part. In witness whereof, we have caused these presents to be given in Congress at Philadelphia, the twenty-ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, and in the fourth year of the independence of the United States of America.

"Signed by the President and sealed with his seal.

"Samuel Huntington, *President*, and a seal.
"Attest: Charles Thomson, *Sec'y*."

The Commission for making a treaty of commerce with Great Britain was in these words: —

"The Delegates of the United States of New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, in Congress assembled,

"To all who shall see the presents, send greeting. It being the desire of the United States that the peace which may be established between them and his Britannic Majesty may be permanent and accompanied with the mutual benefit derived from commerce, Know ye, therefore, that we, confiding in the integrity, prudence, and ability of the Honorable John Adams, Esquire, late Commissioner of the United States of America at the Court of Versailles, late Delegate in Congress from the State of Massachusetts Bay, and Chief Justice of that State, have nominated and constituted and by these presents do nominate and constitute him the said John Adams our Minister Plenipotentiary, giving him full power, general and special, to act in that quality, to confer, agree, and conclude with the ambassador or plenipotentiary of his Britannic Majesty vested with equal powers, of and concerning a treaty of com-

merce; and whatever shall be so agreed and concluded for us and in our name to sign, and thereupon make a treaty of commerce, and to transact every thing that may be necessary for completing, securing, and strengthening the same in as ample form and with the same effect as if we were personally present and acted therein, hereby promising in good faith that we will accept, ratify, fulfil, and execute whatever shall be agreed, concluded, and signed by our said Minister Plenipotentiary, and that we will never act nor suffer any person to act contrary to the same in the whole nor in any part. In witness whereof, we have caused these presents to be given in Congress at Philadelphia, the twenty-ninth day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine, and in the fourth year of the independence of the United States of America.

"Signed by the President and sealed with his seal.

"SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President*, and a seal.
"Attest: CHA. THOMSON, *Sec'y*."

With these two Commissions, I received special instructions in detail. I have submitted, Madam, to the drudgery of copying these Commissions, for your information. If I had ever made any ostentation of talent, or, in your words, had shown any "pride of talent," which I deny, I would produce these Commissions in justification of it; at least, as an apology for it. I had spoken and acted daily, for four years, before that Congress, which was composed of men equal in talents and integrity to any who have since figured in American Councils. I had been abroad about eighteen months, and had minutely informed Congress of all my conduct, which had stood the test of the most critical and vigilant observation of the two most obstinate and inveterate and inflamed parties I ever knew. These Commissions were voted to me by eleven States out of twelve, as I was informed. If, therefore, confidence

was ever placed in any man by others, here was confidence placed in me, by men who had ample experience of my information in American affairs, and in my faculties of conducting them, whatever they were, as well as of my integrity. It is utterly incredible that such men should confide themselves, their country, and all their interests, to a man whose heart they did not believe incorruptible, and whose head they did not think adequate to the service, great, difficult, and dangerous as it was.

It is not, however, from vanity, nor the "pride of talent," that I send you these copies. It is that you may well weigh them, as historical and political documents. For on these Commissions hangs a very long history. Many intrigues have grown out of the subjects of them, especially that for commerce, and the consequences are not yet ended.

In my opinion, most of the disputes we have had with England, if not with France, have sprung from the jealousy which soon appeared of that Commission, and the intrigues to get rid of it. I shall not enter into this history at this time: it would require a volume. You seem to have had no idea of this great tract of history; or did you omit it, Madam, for fear it should do honor to me, or for fear it should do dishonor to the Comte de Vergennes, or for fear it should bring into suspicion the fortitude or patriotism of some of your present political patrons?

You have carefully recorded the appointment of Mr. Jay to Madrid, in page 141, Vol. II., to have been on the 27th of September, 1779, yet have taken no notice of mine, which was on the 29th of the same month. Both these missions had been under deliberation and discussion for some time, and were both resolved before any person was nominated. Congress determined to nominate a minister first for Spain, and Mr. Jay was chosen; after this, John Adams was nominated for peace and commerce, chosen, and appointed. I am not able

to account, Madam, for your knowledge of one event or your ignorance of the other. If it was not "pride," it was presumption, "of talent," in a lady to write a history with so imperfect information or so little impartiality.

In page 276 of the second volume, you say that, early in the present year, the Honorable Henry Laurens, of South Carolina, late President of the Continental Congress, was vested with this important Commission. What Commission? You say above, "A minister with proper credentials to appear in a public character at the Hague." I have not pride of talent enough to say what Commission Mr. Laurens had. I have never inspected, with this view, the Secret Journal of Congress, in which those proceedings of Congress were recorded. Mr. Laurens came over to Holland after his release from the Tower, and told me he had no Commission. By this I supposed that he had sunk his Commission in the sea, at the time of his capture. But I know not, to this day, whether he ever had a commission, or credentials as a public minister. My present opinion is that he had only a Commission as agent to borrow money. If in this I am mistaken, I am sorry for it; but the fact may be ascertained by recurring to the Secret Journal of Congress. I have several reasons for this conjecture, among which is this: that Mr. Laurens never mentioned to me any other credentials; and another is that no mention is made in my Commission of any other. My Commission is dated the twentieth day of June, 1780, and is in these words: —

"[L. S.] The United States of America, in Congress assembled, to the Honorable John Adams, Esquire, greeting.

"Whereas by our commission to the Honorable Henry Laurens, Esquire, bearing date the thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred

and seventy-nine, we have constituted and appointed him, the said Henry Laurens, during our pleasure, our agent for and on behalf of the said United States, to negotiate a loan with any person or persons, bodies politic and corporate; and whereas the said Henry Laurens has, by unavoidable accidents, been hitherto prevented from proceeding on his said agency, we, therefore, reposing especial trust and confidence in your patriotism, ability, conduct and fidelity, do, by these presents, constitute and appoint you, the said John Adams, until the said Henry Laurens, or some other person appointed in his stead, shall arrive in Europe, and undertake the execution of the aforesaid commission, our agent for and on behalf of the said United States to negotiate a loan, with any person or persons, bodies politic and corporate, promising in good faith to ratify and confirm whatsoever shall by you be done in the premises or relating thereunto. Witness his Excellency Samuel Huntington, Esq., President of the Congress of the United States of America, at Philadelphia, the twentieth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty, and in the fourth year of our independence.

"SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President.*

"Attest: CHARLES THOMSON, *Sec'y.*"

Of this Commission, Madam, although it was issued long before Mr. Laurens's departure from America, you take no notice. On the contrary, in page 300, Vol. II., you say, "Immediately after the news of Mr. Laurens's capture, imprisonment, and detention in England, the American Congress directed *John Adams, Esquire,* who had a second time been sent to Europe in a public character, to leave France and repair to Holland, there to transact affairs with the States-General, which had before been intrusted to the fidelity of Mr. Laurens. Mr. Adams's Commission was enlarged."

This is the only notice you have taken of my Commissions as Minister Plenipotentiary to treat of peace and commerce with Great Britain. Who could understand what was meant by being sent a second time to Europe in a public character? I was not in France, and had been long in Holland, which Congress knew very well, for they had received a great number of letters from me in Holland. Although I went first to Spain, and then to France, where I resided some months, yet neither my Commissions nor instructions as Minister for Peace and Commerce required of me to reside in France. All Europe was open to me, at my discretion. I might have gone directly to England, and Lord North said he wished Mr. Adams had come to London, where he should have been protected, for his Lordship began to be convinced that he must treat.

I had no thoughts of this, however, because it would have been a just cause of jealousy to our ally. But I went to Holland to see and reconnoitre that country, to make more friends for my country, and to see, as I told Dr. Franklin, whether I could not find means of rendering America somewhat less dependent on France. The Doctor, whom you respect so profoundly, immediately wrote this to Congress as a complaint against me. Congress did not, it seems, think it a crime to make them more independent. But instead of punishing, recalling, or censuring me, they exerted themselves to assist me, and authorized me to do what I hoped and intended. I accomplished it so fully that I not only made Congress, but Dr. Franklin himself, less dependent upon France. For years before he left France he could get no money to pay his own salary, nor even the expenses of his household, but from the fund I had obtained in Holland. How was Mr. Adams's Commission enlarged? No Commission of his was enlarged or diminished. His Commissions for peace and commerce remained in full force, and to them was added a new Commission to negotiate a loan of money.

On the twenty-ninth day of December, 1780, Congress issued another Commission, in these words: —

"[L. S.] The United States of America, in Congress assembled, to all who shall see these presents, send greeting.

"Whereas an intercourse between the citizens of the United Provinces of the Low Countries and the citizens of these United States, founded on the principles of equality and reciprocity, may be of mutual advantage to both nations, Know ye, therefore, that we, confiding in the integrity, prudence, and ability of the Honorable John Adams, late Commissioner of the United States of America at the Court of Versailles, late Delegate in Congress from the State of Massachusetts Bay, and Chief Justice of the said State, have nominated, constituted, and appointed, and by these presents do nominate, constitute, and appoint him, the said John Adams, our Commissioner, giving full power, general and special, to act in that quality, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the person or persons vested with equal powers by the States-General of the said United Provinces, of and concerning a treaty of amity and commerce; and whatever shall be so agreed and concluded for us, and in our name, to sign, and thereupon make such treaty, conventions, and agreements as he shall judge conformable to the ends we have in view. Hereby promising, in good faith, that we will accept, ratify, and execute whatever shall be agreed, concluded, and signed by our said Commissioner. In witness whereof, we have caused these presents to be given in Congress at Philadelphia, the twenty-ninth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty, and in the fifth year of our independence.

"Signed: SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, *President.*
"Attest: CHARLES THOMSON, *Sec'y.*"

At the same time, Congress sent me a letter of credence to his Serene Highness the Prince of Orange, as Stadtholder of the United Provinces.

There is no mention here of any Commission to Mr. Laurens to negotiate a treaty of commerce, or of any letter of credence as a Minister Plenipotentiary. In short, I have reason to believe that the appointment of a Minister Plenipotentiary to the States-General or to the Stadtholder was occasioned entirely by my letters, in a great number of which I had recommended these measures, and urged them by every argument of necessity or expediency that occurred to my own mind, or was suggested by my confidential friends, of whom I had many among the first characters for talents and influence in the country, besides the Baron Van der Capellen de Pol, and his brother, Van der Capellen de March. These letters are recorded in the books of the office of foreign affairs at Washington; and, if they should be destroyed, they remain in my own letter books. I had urged the appointment of a public minister, not only to the States, but to the Stadtholder, as a public measure of great public utility, but had not solicited this appointment for myself. Whatever may be thought of it now, I had business enough as Minister of Peace, and I knew not how soon I might be called to act publicly in that character; and I thought there was danger that I should be embarrassed between the two trusts, as in fact it afterwards happened. I was accordingly very much concerned when I received the full power to negotiate a loan, and still more, when that arrived, to negotiate a treaty with the States, and represent my country at the Prince of Orange's Court, lest the duties of one Commission or another should be neglected. But, as the papers arrived, I determined to do all in my power. In page 161 of the third volume, you say that, "on Mr. Adams's arrival in Holland, he found every thing in a happy train for negotiation; the people well disposed,

and many of the most distinguished characters zealous for a treaty with the American States without any farther delay."

Here, Madam, your information is very erroneous. The people, it is true, except the Stadtholderians and the Anglomanes, who were very numerous and then all powerful, were well disposed towards the Americans, and heartily wished them well; but neither the people nor any of the distinguished characters were zealous or even willing for a treaty. Not even Mr. Van Berckel and his friend Mr. Bicker, nor Mr. Geizlar, the Pensioner of Dort, were ready for a treaty as yet. And America had no better friends than these. Holland was full of the spies of the Stadtholder and the English ministry in England, and of Sir Joseph York, the British Ambassador at the Hague. Even some of the American refugees, particularly Paul Wentworth, came over to watch and counteract me. Sir Joseph York began soon to thunder with his memorials to the States-General, and to demand vengeance against some, and threaten vengeance against all. War was dreaded by the whole nation as the greatest of evils; and they all knew that an acknowledgment of American independence would draw down the most furious indignation of England, and produce an immediate declaration of war against them. Such was the universal terror that Mr. John De Neufville told me that Amsterdam, and especially the Exchange, was more gloomy and dismal than a church-yard. Mr. Van Berckel was under such apprehensions that he dared not have any communication with me. I made a visit to his house, but was denied admittance. I wrote him letters, but received no answer. He was reduced to the necessity of writing secretly to Mr. Dumas, to pray him to make his apology to me, and to say that, though he was very desirous to see me, and to answer my letters, he dared to do neither, — "parce qu'on fait tout son possible pour me sacrifier aux Anglomanes," *i. e.* "because they are using their utmost

endeavors to sacrifice me to the English party." This gentleman and others were apprehensive of the fate of the De Witts, *i. e.* of being torn to pieces by an enraged populace stirred up by their enemies. And many people thought I had more reason to tremble than Mr. Van Berckel. I might have retreated to France under twenty pretexts, or I might have gone on a journey of curiosity or pleasure into Germany or to Antwerp; but I thank God that, in those parts of my life when I have thought myself in the most personal danger, I have hitherto found myself the most collected. I determined, therefore, to remain at my post and ride out the storm.

The next paragraphs I never could read without laughing: "Mr. Adams's manner and habits were much more assimilated to the Dutch than to the French nation."

The satirical sneer intended in this place would have come from Mrs. Warren with a better grace in a satirical poem than in a grave history. However, I declare the assertion to be false. Distinguishing morals from manners, I avow that the manners and habits of the French are more agreeable to me than those of Holland, England, or even my own dear country, America. Conversation is more gay, more sprightly, more good-humored, more entertaining and instructive in France than in any country I ever saw. And their temperance, *savoir-vivre*, is more agreeable than the deep drinking and perpetual electioneering politics which poison society in England and America, and even in Holland. Though this trait was intended for a sting, it has not wounded me. It has excited nothing but ridicule. If it was worth while, I could produce very satisfactory proofs that my manners and habits were at least as acceptable in France as those of any minister America has ever yet sent there. I could appeal to the Duke de la Vauguyon, with whom I lived in the strictest intimacy for many years, and to the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and Mr. Marbois, and, indeed, to all the French

men and women with whom I ever conversed, to determine whether my manners were ever disagreeable to them. They were only politicians and intriguers who found fault with me, and they not for my manners, but my morals; and because they said I had *beaucoup de tête*, that is, head enough to understand them, and obstinacy enough to resist their insidious policy.

This assertion, however, I can easily suppose Mrs. Warren has borrowed from some informer. But there is something that follows, which I cannot conceive could have been communicated to her by any person in the world. "He took lodgings at Amsterdam for several months, at the house of Mr. Dumas, a man of some mercantile interest, considerable commercial knowledge, not acquainted with manners or letters, but much attached to the Americans from the general predilection of Dutchmen in favor of republicanism."

It is impossible for me to conjecture the source from whence this foolish information could have arisen. Whether ignorance, dulness, or malice produced it, I know not. If I had been dead, it might have passed for truth and gone down to posterity. But it shall not. It was manifestly intended to cast a slur upon me for an injudicious choice of lodgings, and as having stooped below my character in domiciliating myself with a trader. But it is all false. Mr. Dumas never lived in Amsterdam. Mr. Dumas never was a merchant. Mr. Dumas never had any mercantile interest. If Mr. Dumas had any commercial knowledge, it was merely theoretical, and such as every man of reading and reflection, and knowledge of the world, possesses. Mr. Dumas was a man of the world, and well acquainted with manners. Mr. Dumas was so much of a man of letters that he was one of the most accomplished classical scholars that I have been acquainted with, and had taken as general a survey of ancient and modern science and literature as most of the professors of

the Universities of Europe or America. He was indeed much attached to the Americans, but from better motives and more knowledge than "the general predilection of Dutchmen in favor of republicanism."

Such was Mr. Dumas. He always lived at the Hague, at least from my first knowledge of his name till his death at upwards of fourscore. He had been in England before our Revolution, and Dr. Franklin had been in Holland, in both of which countries Dr. Franklin and Mr. Dumas had become acquainted, and attached in friendship to each other.

When Dr. Franklin was a member of the secret committee of correspondence appointed by Congress, he advised them to write to Mr. Dumas. When Dr. Franklin arrived in Paris, a correspondence took place at once between him, Mr. Deane, Mr. Lee, and Mr. Dumas. When I arrived in Paris, the correspondence was continued, and some letters passed between me and Mr. Dumas. Mr. Dumas corresponded also with Congress; and he was allowed three hundred pounds sterling a year for his services. All this had passed before I ever visited Holland or had seen the face of this gentleman.

What kind of republicanism, Mrs. Warren, do you think was the general predilection of Dutchmen? It was a self-created, self-continued, and self-preserved aristocracy, in which the people had no more share than they had in France; no more, indeed, than they had in Turkey, for in Turkey the people sometimes rise in mobs, and so they did in Holland. Besides this, Mr. Dumas was not a Dutchman, in Mrs. Warren's sense. He was a native of Germany. I can say no more about republicanism, because I know not the meaning of the word as Mrs. Warren uses it. And I believe she does not know her own meaning; at least, I am confident she will never give me nor the public a definition of it.

Soon after my arrival at Amsterdam in midsummer,

1780, Mr. Dumas came from the Hague to make me a visit, and pay his respects to me as an ambassador in the service of the country in whose service he was a subordinate agent. This was my first personal acquaintance with him: he stayed a few days, and returned to his home. We continued our correspondence occasionally.

When afterwards I received my commission to negotiate a loan, I took a house in Amsterdam, Op. de Keisers Gracght, by de Spiegel Straat. The house was as commodious and elegant as my public character required and my appointments would afford; for I had no additional allowance from Congress for any commission or services but those for peace. I employed Messrs. Sigourney and Ingraham, an American house established at that time in trade at Amsterdam, to furnish my house with movables and necessary servants, which they did while I was absent at Leyden and the Hague. Here I lived with as much hospitality to my American fellow-citizens who visited me, and to the inhabitants of the city with whom I was acquainted, and to all strangers who were recommended or introduced to me, as was in my power, though not so much as was in my will.

What you mean, Madam, by my "associating much with the common classes," I know not. It seems as if your pen could not possibly approach my name without issuing some insinuation of meanness and awkwardness, or, in other and plainer words, without venting some spiteful hint. Travelling in the Trecht Schuits, and at the inns where I dined and lodged, I endeavored to converse with the people and obtain as much knowledge of the country and its inhabitants — their manners, customs, laws, and politics, and of their sentiments of France, England, and America — as I could, and associated no otherwise with the common classes, unless you except my domestic servants.

My society in Amsterdam were Burgomaster Hooft; Mr. Van Berckel, as respectable a man as any in Amsterdam;

Mr. Vischer, another pensionary; the House of Horneca, Fizeaux, and Grand, a respectable French banking house; the Van Staphorsts; De la Lande and Fynje; Mr. Crommelin, an ancient gentleman who had retired from commerce with a fortune, and his three sons, who with large property and high credit carried on the extensive trade of the company; Mr. John De Neufville and son; and especially Mr. Bicker, who had closed the accounts of an ancient house, and retired upon a capital of four or five millions. This gentleman was a most intelligent and useful friend, always ready to inform and advise me, and that with all the prudence, caution, and circumspection which my situation required. His son also, who was then a magistrate, that is, a judge and a counsellor of the city, was my acquaintance and friend, both at Amsterdam and the Hague. There was no better company in that country. I might have added Mr. John Hodshon, one of the first capitalists, who was as honorable a friend as any that I found. I was advised to be introduced to Mr. Hope, the dominant mercantile house in Holland, and Mr. Hodshon offered to bring us together; but, upon a careful inquiry, I found that the house of Hope did all the business of the British ministry in Holland, on which he drew commissions to a large amount, that he would hold himself obliged to communicate whatever he knew to the English government; and, above all, that he had conceived a notion that America ought not to expect to borrow money at a lower interest than the Batavians had given in their revolution, which was ten or twelve per cent: for these reasons I determined to have nothing to do with him or his house. I had many other acquaintances, and several among the literary characters; but these I shall not name, because excepting Mr. Calkoen they had little political or moneyed connections with me.

After the receipt of my Commission and credence as minister plenipotentiary to the States-General and the Prince of Orange, I bought a house at the Hague every

way fit for a public minister, even if he had the title of an Ambassador, and removed my furniture into it. Here I resided as I had done at Amsterdam; but, finding myself perplexed with the care of a family and the peculations and villanies of servants, Mr. Dumas, whose property was not large, though he had a small real estate, and his income as American agent but small, offered to remove with his family into my house. I readily accepted his proposal, and promised to bear all his expenses. He came accordingly with his wife and one child, an amiable and beautiful daughter of about twelve years of age, and took the oversight of my servants and family affairs, to my great relief and their considerable emolument. It was a regular and a virtuous family, as far as ever I observed or heard. This, Madam, is the Mr. Dumas whom you have transmitted to posterity in so contemptible a light.

From page 163 to 166 inclusively, you have been pleased to insert a little approbation, and something like a panegyric; yet, in a note at the end of it, you could not restrain your malignity against me, but must poison it all by a base insinuation: "Their object then was a free, independent republic, without any approximation to regal authority or monarchic usages; there was no sighing then for rank, titles, and the expensive trappings of nobility." The insinuation here is too obvious to need any explanatory commentary. It is intended by the historian to gratify the prejudices of the present ruling party in America, and to sanction the slanders by which they ascended to power. Every true blue Jacobin who reads it will easily and readily apply it to all the lies he has heard and read concerning me, and cry out in all his drunken circles: "Ah! John Adams was once for a free, independent republic, without any approximation to regal authority or monarchic usages; but since he has been 'corrupted' in England, he has been sighing for rank, titles, and the

expensive trappings of nobility." I was always for a free republic; not a democracy, which is as arbitrary, tyrannical, bloody, cruel, and intolerable a government as that of Phalaris with his bull is represented to have been. Robespierre is a perfect exemplification of the character of the first bell-wether in a democracy. That I ever sighed for rank, titles, or the expensive trappings of nobility, is false; and Mrs. Warren knows me well enough to know that there is not a man in the world to whom rank, titles, and the expensive trappings of nobility are more indifferent.

What have I done, Mrs. Warren, to merit so much malevolence from a lady concerning whom I never in my life uttered an unkind word or a disrespectful insinuation? At least, until your History appeared, nor even since I read it, till I began to write these letters. I have still confined my resentment to these communications to yourself. In these, I have used the words of truth and soberness. Still in hopes that you will do me all the justice in your power, I subscribe myself your friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

3.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, Mass., August 1, 1807.

JOHN ADAMS, ESQ.

SIR, — Your fourth letter, like the preceding ones, discovers a fixed determination to misconstrue every expression of mine wherever you, sir, are introduced in my History of the American Revolution. I am astonished that you should discover so much resentment at a sentence in page 140, particularly at the word "mortified." I did, at the time alluded to, think you in a mortified situation; I did think you had been ill-treated, from your own representations, on your return from France in 1779. Mr.

Warren and myself visited you in the retirement noticed, — firmer and more attached friends you had not then in the United States. We both thought alike on your deportment at the time, and both regretted the disappointment, chagrin, and vexation you discovered, and drew our conclusions from your own expressions. But we never named it, and, when it has been alluded to in an historic work, never designed to enter into the details of the wranglings of the American commissioners at the Court of France, it was done in a delicate manner, consistent with the part I had been used to take when you thought yourself injured, either by public or private men; and none of your friends rejoiced more at the very honorable appointment you received, in a few months after your first return, to repair again to Europe in a public character.

The copy of the letter you sent me to Mr. Samuel Adams was a very good one; but, when you recommended through him to Congress to appoint only one gentleman as a plenipotentiary to the Court of France, did you wish Mr. Lee to be the man? You surely could not have wished it to have been Dr. Franklin. I have long known your opinion of him too well to suppose this, and from what I had often heard you say I have not a doubt the bare apprehension would have been reason sufficient for your disgust and mortification.

There are several frivolous criticisms in your letter of July 28th that I do not think worthy of any observation; but, if you will please to look at the eighth page of the same letter, you will not wonder I am totally at a loss what to make of it, as I am at very many pages of the whole of your late correspondence. You there ask, "Who, Madam, has introduced an inundation of atheism, deism, annihilation, gambling, contempt of marriage and the Sabbath? Is it I? Who has disseminated Paine, Barlow, Boulanger, the System of Nature, &c., into the darkest cor-

ners of the obscurest villages in our country? Is it I!" What can you possibly mean by asking Mrs. Warren those questions? Can you mean to insinuate that she has had any part in introducing or encouraging these abominable principles and enormous vices which you have witnessed, both in Europe and America? Or is it meant to reproach any person or persons whom you think she is obliged to defend?

You very well know, sir, that my detestation of the atheistical writers, both in France and England, is at least equal to your own, and my dread of the result of the dissemination of the works of Voltaire and his disciples has often been expressed by my pen; and you never in conversation, in the course of a long acquaintance, had any reason to suspect my veneration for the Christian religion, — the purity of its morals, and the efficacy of its example in promoting the happiness of mankind, both in this world and in the next. Why, then, these extraordinary questions? I might repeat this interrogatory on many other queries, assertions, and allusions, through the whole series of your late correspondence, so replete with jealousy, misconstruction, strange conclusions from unfounded suspicions, and a general want of candor and kindness, as renders the business very unpleasant.

Nothing further need be adduced to prove this than your forced construction on a note of two lines in page 140. Was not the observation true? If it was, where was the impropriety of making it? And is not every one at liberty to draw inferences according to his own ideas of truth?

Your strange suggestion that I had dwelt with pleasure on the word *mortified*, — a word only once used, — I can impute only to the mortified and vexatious state of mind you were then in.

You have appeared in your next letter very much enraged at my informant relative to your residence for a time

under the same roof with Mr. Dumas. You say, "*Mr. Dumas shall not be handed down to posterity as I* [you] *have represented him.*" I do not think it very important whether Mr. Dumas is handed down to posterity as a merchant or a man of letters, — or whether he was a republican in my sense of the word, or in yours; nor is it very material whether you resided with him as a boarder, or he with you as a domestic inspector, as you say he did for some time. The little consequence this is of to the public will exonerate the gentleman from either "*ignorance, dulness, or malice,*" who incidentally mentioned the trivial circumstance to me. The inaccuracy might be mine, that it was at Amsterdam instead of the Hague. I do not see that this information tended to cast a slur upon your character or that it lessened that of Mr. Dumas.

If one or the other is done in this instance, it is by your own pen, — a pen from which I have lately received so much abuse, unfriendly, ungenerous, and ungentlemanly treatment, that my indignation is too much raised to reply to every particular of your dark, unfounded suspicions. Some of them I hold in too much contempt to notice at all. But when you assert that "it is intended by the historian to gratify the prejudices of the present ruling party in America, and to sanction the slanders by which they ascended to power," it reaches a point beyond patient forbearance, where there is any degree of sensibility, honor, or truth. If you wish to read the next scurrilous observations, look at your own copy of July 30th.

I have never added or omitted a line relative to you or any other man from a malignancy of heart with which you so often charge me; nor for fear "*it should do dishonor to the Count de Vergennes; nor for fear it should bring into suspicion the fortitude or patriotism of some of my* [your] *present political patrons.*" Pray, sir, who do you mean by *my* [your] *political patrons?* I have

never had political patronage from any quarter, and I desire to thank a kind Providence I do not stand in need of it.

You have boasted that you "*have done many great and dangerous things that my* [your] *philosophical friend, Mr. Jefferson, had not dared to undertake.*" You add that I "*know all this:*" there, sir, you are mistaken. I never knew that my "*philosophical friend, Mr. Jefferson,*" was afraid to do his duty in any instance. But this I know: he has dared to do many things for the benefit of his country, for which posterity will probably bless his memory; and I hope he will yet, by his wisdom, justice, moderation, and energy, long continue the blessings of peace in our country, and strengthen the republican system to which he has uniformly adhered.

You have somewhere observed that you "can say no more about republicanism, because I know not the meaning of the word as Mrs. Warren uses it, and I believe she does not know her own meaning; at least, I am confident she will never give me nor the public a definition of it." Mrs. Warren has already given you a definition of her meaning in several parts of her historical work.

You may see her ideas how the system ought to operate in page 432, Vol. III., of Mrs. Warren's History: "The people may again be reminded that the elective franchise is in their own hands; that it ought not to be abused, either for personal gratification or the indulgence of partisan acrimony. This advantage should be improved, not only for the benefit of existing society, but with an eye to that fidelity which is due to posterity. This can only be done by electing such men to guide the national councils, whose conscious probity enable them to stand like a colossus on the broad basis of independence, and by correct and equitable arrangements endeavor to lighten the burdens of the people, strengthen their unanimity at home, command justice abroad, and cultivate peace with all na-

tions, until an example may be left on record of the practicability of meliorating the condition of mankind."

Thus, you may see, by what I have already written, what I mean by a free republic, and that my ideas are very different from those which you exhibit, when you assert that "*Robespierre is a perfect exemplification of the character of the first bell-wether in a democracy*," and go on in the same page to expatiate on "the true blue Jacobins, and the drunken circles that will apply my [your] representations, and cry out: Ah, John Adams," &c.

But, after I have heard you say that the celebrated Mrs. Macaulay knew nothing about government, I cannot wonder at your saying "it is presumption in a lady to write a History with so little information as Mrs. Warren has acquired." Perhaps that presumption might have been excited by yourself, when with the warmest expression of friendship you acknowledged you had received a letter from an *incomparable satirist*, and requested your most profound respects might be presented to her, desiring her husband at the same time to tell her that "God Almighty (I use a bold style) has intrusted her with powers for the good of the world, which in the course of his providence he bestows upon very few of the human race; that, instead of being a fault to use them, it would be criminal to neglect them." — Letter to General Warren, Braintree, March 15, 1775.

Such a flight of encomium is not claimed by Mrs. Warren as her prescriptive right, — she has viewed it as the exuberance of partiality from a real friend; but as it was from a friend who has declared that he never used any dissimulation or flattery, either to man or woman, her judgment might be so far imposed upon as to lead her to attempt an historic record without the fear of a charge from the same gentleman of either "pride or presumption of talents."

Is not this a sufficient apology for transcribing an extract so flattering to the *pride or presumption* of

MERCY WARREN.

No. 6.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, August 3d, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — In your third volume, page 169, you say that "on the 22d of April, 1782, Mr. Adams was admitted at the Hague, and with the usual ceremonies received as minister plenipotentiary from the United States of America." This mistake of a few days in chronology is scarcely worth a remark, but I suppose you would wish to be correct. It was on the 19th day of April, not the 22d.

In the 176th page, you quote an author as saying that "one more such revolution (as ours, is understood) would give freedom to the world." There has been one revolution since, and what kind of freedom has it given to the world?

I have passed over a passage which ought to have been noted in page 175. You say: "The people had been divided between an aristocratic and a republican party: the one influenced by their attachment to the Stadtholder; the other had co-operated with the interests of France." It is not surprising that an American lady should misunderstand and be misinformed in relation to the government of Holland, and the temper, genius, and habits of the people, as well as their political principles. But nothing can be more diametrically opposite to the fact than your representation of it. The Dutch nation had no idea of any republic but an aristocracy. The aristocratic party, instead of being influenced by an attachment to the Stadtholder, were the only persons who opposed him, and finally drove him to Bois le Duc. The people, as distinguished from the aristocracy, were almost universally his friends, and attached to him as much as the people of France were to their king, or as the people of England were to theirs.

It was the people as contradistinguished from the aristocracy who first established William the First Prince of Orange. These people supported Maurice, and afterwards King William. These people have supported the Stadtholderate in all times. It was with the good-will and applause of this same people attached to the Stadtholder, and in opposition to the aristocracy, that Barneveldt was beheaded, Grotius imprisoned and banished to France, and the De Witts massacred. These were among the first of mankind in integrity, talents, and wisdom; yet they were sacrificed, as many similar characters are now in America, to popular prejudices and the falsehoods and slanders which such prejudices always engender, and which Mrs. Warren has manifestly countenanced, encouraged, and flattered in her History. This same people, instead of co-operating with the interests of France, have always been in opposition to it, and always attached to the Stadtholder and the English nation. Their affection for us was partly because they considered us as a part of the English nation, and partly because they thought we were contending against our oppressors, as their ancestors had done against Spain. The cry of liberty had a charm in their ears, but they knew not what American liberty meant. They probably thought it was the same as their own, though they had none in reality, — that is, no political liberty, — any more than the people of France. They had no legal or constitutional mode of expressing their opinions or their wishes or their feelings. And they never did express them but upon great and dangerous emergencies, and then only by mobs, riots, uproars, and seditions. Had a Maurice, or even a King William, been Stadtholder when I was in Holland, Mr. Van Berckel and your present correspondent might have experienced the fate of the De Witts; for the populace was on tiptoe, and wanted only a little more encouragement to have proceeded to the last extremities.

I had many opportunities of observing the sentiments of these people. I was present at Utrecht at the time of the revolution of that province. These people had been wrought up to fury against the aristocracy, and under the conduct of a Scotch officer of their army had demolished the old aristocracy, and chosen a new one by popular election. Annual, biennial, or any other elections limited by years, were either not thought of, or could not be carried. I saw the inauguration, and this Scotch officer was the master of the ceremonies, and administered the oaths. Every officer and every magistrate of the new order was permanent, was perpetual, was for life.

The people could not trust themselves with periodical elections. Here, then, was a new aristocracy instituted by the voluntary decree of the people with the same functions and powers with that which they turned out by force, and in which the people had no share, over which they had no power, and could have no influence but by a fresh uproar. When the King of Prussia came to the aid of the Stadtholder, all these people flew over to his side with rapture, and the whole seven provinces became as yellow as an orange.

I could relate proofs enough of this. One I will mention more. The Baron Van der Capellen de Pol often complained to me that the patriots could do nothing with the people. He said they were haunted by the demon of aristocracy in every province, city, and village. It entered into the souls of every order of citizens: he met with it, and was resisted by it in every project he could invent. One instance in particular he related to me in detail. He went, he said, upon some occasion to Amsterdam, and took great pains to assemble the merchants to deliberate upon some political question in which the commerce of that city was interested. He procured a general meeting, and proposed some measures to be taken. He strove to reason with them, and convince them, and persuade them to put

the proposition to vote. No: the great majority would have no question put. They would appoint three or four men to manage the business according to their judgments. The Baron hoped the committee would report to the assembly that their results might be deliberated on, and accepted or rejected by the assembly at large. No; the cry was immediately general, if the business was to be conducted and decided in a *crowd*, they would have nothing to do with it. Accordingly, a small committee was appointed with full power to do the whole at their discretion, and the assembly was immediately dissolved to meet no more. It is the aristocracy which has always inclined to France. Barneveldt, Grotius, the De Witts, were all of that party, and disposed rather to France than England. The French ambassadors, the French Court and nation, have always endeavored to conciliate these, and consequently, always in opposition to the Stadtholder and the people, both of whom have been always inclined to the English. It was the people in their uproars who made the Stadtholdership permanent, — first for life, and afterwards hereditary.

The attachment of the people to the Stadtholdership appeared in a thousand instances. The capital manufacturers who were inclined to the aristocracy, and consequently to France, tried the experiment with their journeymen. Mr. Van Heukelem, of Leyden, the greatest woollen manufacturer, I believe, in the United Provinces, who employed a great number of workmen, told me that the bigoted devotion to the Orange Family among all the artificers was astonishing, that he had gone among his own people and conversed familiarly with them, endeavored to convince them that the Stadtholdership was unnecessary, that it was a restraint of their liberty, and the republic would be better without it; but he said he could make no impression. His journeymen to a man rejected all his insinuations, and declared to him in plain Dutch language:

"Say or do what you will, you and your friends, — we will have a Stadtholder." And they ran out into long histories of the contests between the regencies and the Stadtholder, in which they showed the oppression of the people and the disgrace of the State when the patriotic party had prevailed, and the happiness of the people and prosperity of the State when the House of Orange had prevailed, in justification of their resolution, which surprised him. He had no idea, he said, "that those people had so much knowledge of the history of the country." This history is very true, notwithstanding the splendid naval actions under their aristocracy in some periods.

One more anecdote, which happened when I was in Holland, shall be related. The legislature passed and proclaimed a placart, forbidding all persons to wear orange cockades. It was posted up in all public places, and published in all the usual forms of a public law. The Doyen of the turf-lifters immediately procured him a monstrous orange cockade, and wore it publicly everywhere in the streets of the Hague, in open defiance and derision of the legislature. Did this legislature prosecute this man? No: they dared not. Did the people hiss this man? No: as far as they dared, they snickered and giggled, and were mightily pleased. There is a set of men called turf-lifters, because they carry turf about the cities for the consumption of the inhabitants; and, being generally very stout, hardy, and daring men, are as much dreaded in popular uproars as are the butchers of Pennsylvania. This Doyen was the oldest man of this class at the Hague, fourscore and upwards I believe, had been one of the stoutest of them, and famous for his feats on former occasions. In short, he was supposed to have the body of the turf-lifters as much at his devotion as Mackintosh was once supposed to have a certain class in Boston. What could the legislature do? Braved, disobeyed, insulted to their faces by a turf-lifter! They dared not exert one act of

authority. But a caucus of their chiefs, after grave consultation and deliberation, concluded to send two of their most popular, or rather least unpopular, members, to treat with the Doyen. These gentlemen took an opportunity to send for him secretly in an amicable way. He appeared. They represented to him the placart. "I know it very well," said the old man. They then represented to him his conduct in disobedience of it. "Very true," said the old man, "and here is the hat with the cockade in it." They then assumed an air of friendship, entreated him to consider the dangerous tendency of his behavior; that it would produce divisions, quarrels, and perhaps uproars; for all riots, routs, and unlawful assemblies, in the laws of Holland, are called uproars. They used every argument which could influence his reason or touch his feelings. The old man heard them all with a solemn, stern, immovable countenance till they had exhausted their ingenuity, without uttering a word. After they had ceased for some time, and a solemn, gloomy pause on his part, he raised his arm on high, and with his brawny, enormous fist struck upon the table before them a blow almost enough to split the board, and roared out, "There is no knowing how to live with you," and here he ceased. The gentlemen then began to inquire: "Why? How? What is the matter? What hinders your living with us; or what part of our conduct is it that you do not understand? Mention it, and we will explain it if we can." It was a long time before they could get any thing more from him; but at last he broke out again: "It is but so many years ago that you issued a placart commanding all persons to wear orange cockades; now you send out another forbidding all persons to wear orange cockades. There is no knowing where to find you."

The gentlemen continued to reason, to soften, to apologize, without daring to threaten. At last, the old man's generous feelings were wrought upon, and he expressed

them in his own way. Taking his cockade out of his hat, "Well," said he, "this once I will put you upon trial. I will wear the orange cockade no more. But remember this, if you ever issue another placart commanding us to wear the orange cockade, Dunder and Blixom seize me, if I obey you." This is the vulgar Dutch oath, which is as strong and horrid as any you can conceive in English. This, which is a true history, shows the distinctions between Stadtholder, and aristocrats, and the people, and that the last were unalterably attached to the first.

The "republicanism," Madam, of the people of the United Provinces was Stadtholderism, or House of Orangeism; and the republicanism of the regencies was aristocracy, unlimited by any Stadtholder on one side or any people on the other.

Of the third party you speak of, which embraced a system more free, I know nothing. It existed not in my time. Mr. Cerisier, after I left the country, published a book which he called "Grundwettige Herstelling," in which he recommended a Constitution in three branches, somewhat like that of England, as I have heard. I understand not enough of the Dutch to read it, and I have often heard the most zealous friends of liberty in Holland wish for the Constitution of England instead of their own. Other third party I know not. It must have been even more insignificant than our third party in America, who love their country only, without fawning love or servile fear either of France or England. The aristocratic party called in the French to subdue the Stadtholder; and the people and the world have seen their reward. There were others, the most worthy men in the nation, who wished for a good understanding with all their neighbors, without any servile attachment or submission to any.

By what has been said, I think it is manifest that either your information or mine is extremely erroneous. For eight years, *i. e.* from 1780 to 1788, I was conversant in

Holland, and held a public employment in it. Several years I lived constantly there. I read as much as I could of their history, policy, and government. I inquired diligently into the character, views, principles, and habits of the nation.

In the next page, Mrs. Warren's benevolence to Mr. Adams is again displayed in a copious stream of her historical eloquence: "Mr. Adams had never enjoyed himself so well as while residing in the Dutch Republic." I know not what foundation Mrs. Warren has for this observation. In Holland, I had a fit of sickness, the most severe that I ever experienced, and as dangerous as any man ever passed through and lived. It left me debilitated both in body and in memory, to a degree that I have never since recovered, and for two years after it I had scarcely a day of good health. I was pursued into Holland by the intrigues of Vergennes and Franklin, and was embarrassed and thwarted, both in my negotiations for a loan and in those of a political nature, by their friends, agents, and spies, as much, at least, as I ever had been in France. I had found friends, very ingenious and learned friends, in France as well as in Holland.

"His genius was not altogether calculated for a court life amidst the conviviality and gayety of Parisian taste." How does Mrs. Warren know this? Who is her informer? I know of no source from whence she could draw it except the English newspapers, in which the American refugees inserted a great deal of such coarse stuff. Pray was the genius of Franklin or Jay or Laurens or Jefferson better calculated? Do you think the genius of Mr. Morris, Mr. Monroe, Mr. Livingston, or Mr. Armstrong, better calculated? If you do, you know nothing of Franklin, Jay, Laurens, Morris, Monroe, Livingston, or Armstrong. It was not the genius of any of these that made them agreeable or disagreeable in France, but their politics and their subserviency or repugnancy to the political views

of the French Minister. "In France, he was never happy." I declare this is false, and affirm that I was as happy in France as I ever was in my life, excepting the last seven years. "Not beloved by his venerable colleague, Dr. Franklin." Would you advise me to publish and explain the reasons and history of this? A volume as large as one of yours might do it, and it may one day be done. At present, I will give no other answer to this observation than this: Mr. Silas Deane was beloved, dearly beloved, by his venerable colleague, Dr. Franklin; and Mr. Arthur Lee and Mr. Ralph Izard most cordially hated. Thwarted by the Minister, the Count de Vergennes, he was, but never until he became an ambassador for peace and commerce, nor then until he had been forced to give some broad hints that he never would consent to sacrifice the fisheries and a hundred and fifty millions of acres of land, and the independence of his country too, to the caprice of that Minister. My not being beloved by my venerable colleague, and my being thwarted by De Vergennes, are the greatest glories of my life; and I shall rejoice in both to my last hour.

Your idols, Mrs. Warren, will not have their worship increased, if you force me to expose them naked. "Ridiculed by the fashionable and polite as deficient in the *je ne sais quoi* so necessary in polished society." Franklin, Jay, Laurens, Jefferson, Monroe, Livingston, Morris, and Armstrong, I suppose, were not deficient in this *je ne sais quoi*.

Mrs. Warren, you have exposed yourself to eternal ridicule by this very ladylike, I will not say insinuation, but assertion. No man or woman in France ever ridiculed me in my presence or within my hearing. I never was informed that any person had ridiculed me behind my back. No symptom of ridicule ever appeared in print in any journal, pamphlet, or other publication in print that ever came to my knowledge. I was treated in France by all

sorts of people, from the throne to the footstool, with invariable respect and kindness. When I returned from France in 1779, after having resided there about fifteen months, I brought with me the King's full approbation of my conduct, signified to me by his order in a letter from the Count de Vergennes; and I have in my possession authentic proofs, in writing, of the esteem and respect of some of the most confidential agents of the two ministers, De Sartine and De Vergennes. If the labor were not too great, I would send you copies.

Nevertheless, I will not say that I was not ridiculed in France. Was there a king or a priest in Europe, or a noble or a magistrate, who was not ridiculed? Was there a saint, an angel, or a God in heaven who was not ridiculed? Was there a faithful husband or a chaste wife in France who was not ridiculed? I trow not.

. . . . . .

You may depend upon it, Madam, it required all the imposing influence of the government, the academicians, and economists, and even of the atheists, deists, and philosophers, and it has since appeared that these last had more influence than all the former, to keep up the respect to the grand Franklin. The watchword had been given, and every one of these agreed, whenever he appeared, to say, with solemn French gravity, "*C'est un homme respectable!*" Without this, his droll appearance would have been the sport of the populace wherever he went, notwithstanding all his "*je ne sais quoi.*"

It was the eternal wrangles among my colleagues, and the parties of American and French small folk who were attached to them, and the injury and ruin to our public affairs that were the consequence of them, that occasioned all the unhappiness I felt in France. But I had little less of this in Holland, and should have had as much if I had been honored with colleagues. Who is or who has been your informer, Mrs. Warren? He or they, whoever they

may be, were so deceived themselves, or so determined to deceive you, that I declare to you all the suggestions are false. I have no recollection that I ever had a dispute with any French man or woman in my whole life, nor ever received an uncivil word from, or uttered one uncivil word to, any of them. Neither frigidity or warmth ever appeared to any of them, — certainly not warmth. They have been Englishmen and Americans, and perhaps sometimes Dutchmen, who have excited my irritability, — not Frenchmen. Even Mr. Brissot, who has immortalized a transient conversation between him and me at my house in Grosvenor Square, in which he reports, I believe truly, that I said I did not believe the French nation capable of a free republican government, does not insinuate that there was the least warmth. The whole conversation passed in perfect good humor and entire civility. He left me in friendship, and sent me, after his arrival in France, a complete set of his works. The harshest word that ever passed between me and any Frenchman that I recollect was this. The Duke de Liancourt, on a visit to me when Mr. Jay's treaty with England was first ratified, worked himself up into a passion, and spoke in very harsh terms against the treaty, and the government for ratifying of it. I heard him long without uttering a word. At length, his language became so indecent that I thought it out of character for me to hear it. I gravely, but coolly, said to him that I thought it unbecoming in him, a stranger, treated as he had been everywhere with uniform hospitality, and even kindness, to indulge himself in such expressions concerning the government that protected him and a people who afforded him so good an asylum. The Duke retorted upon me, "*Quand on a l'esprit de parti, on est près de l'injustice*," — "When a man has the spirit of party, he is near the confines of injustice." And here the warmth ended. Neither of us ever thought the worse of the other for this. I have had a sharp contest or two with

De Vergennes upon public questions, in writing. He treated me ill, and I returned him huff for huff. But these papers were laid before Congress in 1780 and 1781, and will speak for themselves. They were excited by a scandalous attempt of his to impose upon America, and I would not be the instrument, as he wanted to make me, of his foolish and dishonest trick. I had the thanks of Congress for what he resented so highly, and their vote of thanks is on record.

I cannot but admire the wonderful fluency and the dear delight with which those soft expressions, "not beloved," "thwarted," "ridiculed," "viewed with jealousy," "hated," "frigidity and warmth," are rolled along by Mrs. Warren, and applied to her old friend who has been all his lifetime more tender of her reputation, and that of her husband, than his own. What have I done to deserve this?

"He there did little of consequence"! I cannot say that Mrs. Warren knew any better, but I must say she was altogether unqualified to write the History she has undertaken, if she did not. For the whole time I was in the commission with Franklin and Lee, I did the whole business of it. Luckily, I have in my possession the original letter-book of the commissioners. It is a folio, and pretty full. Every letter in it but two was written by my hand, and appears in my handwriting. If Mrs. Warren will make me a visit, I will show her this book, one copy of which I left with Franklin, and another I sent to Congress. Congress, I believe, thought there was something of consequence done, and of difficulty too; otherwise, they would not probably have sent me to Europe again to make peace, and that alone, and that with so much unanimity. Through the whole of this period, all the public papers were put into my hands. I disposed of them as they required, and wrote all the answers to letters and all other public papers in my book, had them copied fair by a clerk; and Mr.

Franklin and Mr. Lee had nothing to do but come to my apartment and sign them. This was the daily course, except in cases where I thought there might be a difference of opinion among us, and then I consulted my colleagues first, and then drew the papers according to the sense of the majority. I had afterwards a great deal to do; and I did it in getting the frigate "Alliance" fit for sea, in composing the almost war that existed between the captain and his purser on one side, and all his other officers and crew on the other, and in disposing of five and thirty prisoners who had been arrested for mutiny and a plot to carry the ship to England.

Under my single Commission for peace, I resided in France but a few months, from February to July, I believe, only. In that time, I did business enough, at the express desire of De Vergennes, to involve me in a controversy with him about paper money, and to convince him of the inadmissibility of a plan that he urged me to recommend to Congress, the most absurd, unjust, and ridiculous suggestion that ever came into the head of a French projector. It was no less than for Congress to distinguish Frenchmen from all other nations, and even from all our own American citizens, by paying Frenchmen for the paper money in their hands or the hands of their agents in silver and gold, dollar for dollar, when we had resolved to pay to our own people only one for forty. I conducted that controversy with perfect decorum, transmitted all the papers *pro* and *con* to Congress, and received from them a vote of thanks for my industrious attention to the interest and honor of my country, and especially in this controversy with De Vergennes.

After I had been in Holland about a year, the Count de Vergennes desired to see me at Versailles to consult with me as the sole minister for peace concerning certain propositions of the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia of a mediation of the two imperial courts, in

order to bring forward a peace among the belligerent powers, among whom America was one. I went to Versailles accordingly, and consulted with the minister, and stated to him in writing the rules and principles by which I should conduct the negotiation. These were the same that were observed by me and Mr. Jay, when the final negotiation came on.

I will now explain to you, Madam, the want of love to me in Franklin, and the hatred of Vergennes. Franklin, like many others, thought himself the founder of the American Republic. He had been flattered, both by Europe and America, till his head was turned. He thought himself injured because he was not appointed by Congress to conduct all their negotiations in Europe. He has repeatedly told me that there was no need of more than one. De Vergennes was of the same opinion, and wished Franklin should be the man, because he could manage him as he pleased. Disappointed in this, he united with Deane against Lee and Izard, in hopes of getting rid of all of them. Disappointed in this, and finding me sent to Europe, he was more alarmed than ever. When peace was contemplated, it was the expectation of Franklin to be appointed alone to negotiate it, and Vergennes wished and expected it too. But his agents in America found that Franklin could not be carried, and I was elected almost unanimously to that exclusive commission, which they had destined for Franklin. This, as a demonstration that I possessed more of the confidence of our country than himself, mortified Franklin and all his friends beyond expression. When Vergennes and Franklin found themselves disappointed in getting the philosopher alone into the commission for peace, they set themselves to intriguing with all their engines to get others associated with me; and this point they could not carry without courting the vanity of every part of the Union. For this end, five commissioners were determined on, — John Adams, Benja-

min Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson.

By thus uniting the local feelings of every part of the continent, they carried the new arrangement. No man on earth rejoiced in this more than I did; and no man had so much reason, for I had trembled under the burden of my responsibility from the moment it had been imposed on my shoulders. But the new Commission brought a real mortification to me.

My Commission for commerce was revoked, and none given to the five Commissioners for peace. In this De Vergennes had completely carried his point. But both Franklin and Vergennes were excessively mortified in another point. In spite of all their intrigues, they had not only failed in obtaining the sole power to Franklin: Congress had been so obstinate and disobedient as to give the first place in the new Commission to John Adams. Here, Madam, you have the true secret why Mr. Adams was not beloved by Mr. Franklin. Jealousy and envy engender malice and revenge. Franklin found that John Adams possessed more of the confidence of his country than himself.

If you have ever seen Mr. Marbois' famous intercepted letter, you can be at no loss for the motive of De Vergennes' dislike of me. Marbois had not dared to write that letter, if he had not been previously instructed by Vergennes to oppose us in our claims to the fisheries and our extended boundaries. Marbois' conduct was directly contrary to all his declarations to me in our voyage together, even on the Grand Bank of Newfoundland. He must therefore have found instructions at Philadelphia, contrary to his own opinion.

If you have seen a publication entitled "Politique des Cabinets," which has been published by the late revolutionary government, you must have seen the clearest demonstration of every thing I ever suspected concern-

ing the designs of Vergennes. There is a memorial in it of Vergennes, which lays open his whole head and heart in relation to America. No wonder he did not like me, when he found me an inflexible and incorruptible opposer of all his plans, and especially that I thwarted, foiled, defeated, and completely triumphed over him in every one of his projects respecting fisheries, boundaries, independence, a treaty with Holland, a loan of money, and every thing else excepting the unfortunate Commission for commerce with England: here he succeeded, to the incalculable damage of America, by the timidity of some and the selfish views of others in Congress. I know what I say in all these points, and could write a history of them much more correct, Madam, than yours.

After all, I have no reason to think I was hated by a single courtier, not even by Vergennes. I did business with him often, after all this, in perfect good humor and politeness; dined frequently at his table. My integrity was acknowledged both by him and his master, to the last. Of this I have unquestionable testimony.

I was not summoned from the Hague, by Congress, to assist in the important work of negotiating peace. As I had been alone in the old Commission for peace, given me in 1779, and had communicated to Congress all my proceedings, and was now placed at the head of the new Commission, Congress knew that I should attend the negotiation as soon as it was proper. Congress, indeed, passed a resolution enjoining on all their Commissioners to attend, but this was intended for Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Laurens. Mr. Jefferson, nevertheless, never attended at all; and Mr. Laurens, not till the last evening of the conferences, before the signature of the preliminary articles, when he gave his vote like a man upon the article of the fishery, and procured the insertion of an article concerning slaves.

The Dutch government never conceded to the propriety

of assisting the United States by an advance of moneys, as you say in the 178th page. Neither the States-General, nor the states of any province, nor the regency of any city, ever interfered in the affair of money; nor did the affluent merchants, or others in possession of vast private property, offer with so much alacrity their handsome loans. The great capitalists were very timorous. Some of the most respectable had even refused to open a loan for me. Mr. John Hodgson was the only millionaire who would consent to accept even that lucrative office. Some houses of small capital, but good credit, were ready enough to accept. I had infinite difficulty and perplexity with this business, which would require too much time to develope. At last, the house of William and Jean Willink were persuaded to unite with the Van Staphorsts, and De la Lande and Fynje; and a loan was opened with moderate, but not great success, at first. The Willinks were opulent, and had more opulent relations.

I am, Madam, as in former letters, still your friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN.

No. 4.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, MASS., August 7, 1807.

JOHN ADAMS, Esq.

I know not how to satisfy the demands you make upon my time and patience, without entering into discussions which at this late day I have no wish to call up. Yet the claim of your illiberal criticism, still kept up in your subsequent letters, obliges me, however reluctantly, to pursue my remarks. I shall therefore, as leisure permits, attend to most of your paragraphs, exclusive of the labored details relative to foreign ministers and their Commissions,

and several other circumstances with which I thought I had little to do, and never have much attended to.

I cannot investigate the motives that have induced you to copy and forward to me your diplomatic Commissions, and a detail of transactions in the course of negotiations which I never thought myself obliged to retrace, when writing a general and concise narrative of American affairs through the Revolution. It is not necessary to recur to the style or tenor of your Commissions to convince me or the world that your countrymen had a very high opinion of your abilities and integrity; nor had they any reason to suspect there would ever be any deviation in you from the republican system which they early adopted, and in which they, in general, still persevere. Perhaps yourself, or some other historian, may in future more particularly inform the world, though perhaps not more truly, relative to many diplomatic circumstances too intricate for me to develope, and which no other historian has yet brought forward.

I do not see that the mention of Mr. Jay's appointment to Madrid, or the appointment of any other gentleman abroad, could be construed a neglect of you. I had some general knowledge of the appointment of foreign ministers, and I have had the *presumption* to name them when I thought it necessary, and to speak of them as I thought their merits or demerits required.

It is true I have also mentioned Mr. Laurens's being commissioned to the Dutch Republic; but, from the concise mode of narration which I had prescribed, I never thought myself obliged to enter into all the political, aristocratic, or popular disputes that had occupied the seven United Provinces from the establishment of the House of Orange to the present day, nor to define the features of their government with such precision as to decide whether, in the strictest sense, they leaned most to republicanism or to aristocracy. It was enough for me that from my

earliest youth I had heard them denominated the *Dutch Republic*, in conversation or in writings, either diplomatic, commercial, or historic; and you make use of the same term yourself in your letter to Congress of August 4th, 1779, when you speak of "the means by which the two republics arrived at independency." Yet, in a late letter to me, you have said, "The Dutch nation have no idea of any republic but an aristocracy."

I have never designed to record any history of their "*uproars*," as you style them when you speak of their dissensions: these things were totally irrelevant to my own plan, which was only to give a general sketch of the state of parties and the effects upon the Dutch republic of the dismemberment of the American colonies from Great Britain.

You presume, however, to say that "Mrs. Warren has in her History manifestly countenanced, encouraged, and flattered the falsehoods and slanders which popular prejudices always engender." You proceed with very severe animadversions through the letter. Yet I am very glad you have found any one thing in the History you are striving to traduce that has made you feel good-natured enough to smile. What operated on your risible faculties, you say, was Mrs. Warren's assertion that "Mr. Adams's manners and habits were more assimilated to the Dutch than to the French nation." This was no "satirical sneer:" she thought it true then, she thinks it so still; and why not? You have observed in one of your letters that you "love the Dutchmen with all their faults. There is a strong spirit of liberty among them, and many excellent qualities." That nation is generally characterized as of a more grave and solemn cast than the French: their manners might therefore be properly contrasted with the levity of Frenchmen. But I shall make no further comment on the similarity or dissimilarity of manners. I only observe that no Frenchman would so frequently, and in

such rude language as Mr. Adams has used, give the direct lie to a lady: possibly a Dutchman might, if he was convinced it was much for his interest.

I leave the Dutch Republic and their affairs for the present, after observing that I did not know the form of Mr. Laurens's Commission no more than yourself, until I had consulted the private journals of Congress, which you ought also to have done before you declared that you never knew Mr. Laurens had any Commission, or that you knew nothing about it. If you will take the trouble to look over the private journals of Congress for the autumn of 1779, you will there find that Mr. Laurens was not only appointed an agent to negotiate a loan of money, but that he was vested with a Commission couched in as respectful, honorable, and confidential terms as had been expressed to any diplomatic character, and was fully empowered to negotiate a treaty of amity and commerce with the United Provinces of the Low Countries. After you have done this, you will surely acknowledge that this gentleman was invested with ample powers to transact the most important affairs at the Hague. In consequence of his unfortunate capture, you repaired to Holland, where your negotiations did you much honor; and, when it was recorded by Mrs. Warren, she thought it was done in so just, correct, and gratifying a manner, that Mr. Adams, with all his suspicions, would never complain of either partiality, malignancy, or want of veracity.

"The copious stream of Mrs. Warren's historical eloquence," on which you observe, page 176, Vol. III., appears to have excited your resentment without the smallest foundation. I am ready to answer to every query relative to this offensive page. In the first place, I reply that the assertion that Mr. Adams enjoyed himself better while residing in the Dutch Republic than he had done before is founded on your own letters to General Warren, myself, and to others; after which I have introduced a very

complimentary sentence to Mr. Adams, of which he takes no notice.

I have next asserted that Mr. Adams's genius was not altogether calculated for a court life, &c. You petulantly ask, "How does Mrs. Warren know this; and who was her informer?" She needed no informer: she had been acquainted with Mr. Adams herself for near thirty years. She knew his plain manners and unpolished habits were not altogether calculated for a court life, without having entered herself into the conviviality and gayety of Parisian taste, and ventured to add from the sources above mentioned that in France he was never happy. I have no objections, sir, to your publishing, in your own time, the reasons why you were "not beloved by your venerable colleague, Dr. Franklin."

The thwartings of the Minister, the Count de Vergennes, and the vexation and complaints you have uttered against him, as well as the Doctor, would make a considerable pamphlet from your own letters now lying in my cabinet.

I did not deny that either of these circumstances was "the greatest glory of your life," as you yourself affirm.

You go on thus: "Your idols, Mrs. Warren, will not have their worship increased, if you force me to expose them naked." When I can devise who you can possibly mean by "my idols," I may say something to that. If there has ever been any American in France to whom I paid too much devotion, it was to yourself; and, if this *idol* should *expose* himself *naked*, the undue worship that has been paid to him by others might decline.

Where I have observed that you had been ridiculed by the fashionable and polite as deficient in the "*je ne sais quoi*," I did not say that Dr. Franklin, Mr. Jay, or any other of the American ministers were possessed of all the graces required by Chesterfield; nor have I said whether they were or were not ridiculed, nor how much they deserved it.

Your allegations, sir, with regard to yourself, are sometimes very contradictory: this may be owing sometimes to the warmth, and sometimes to the frigidity of your temper, in which there is certainly a commixture, or you could not at one time boast that you went on as smooth as oil, without enmity, jealousy, or hatred, from any man or woman in France; at another, chagrin and disgust from such causes appear in various portions of your letters to your confidential friends.

In one page, you say you were never ridiculed by any one person in France, — that it was the "*Grand Franklin*" on whom all the ridicule fell, and on whom the satirists of France exercised their wit; in the next, you ask, "Was there a king or a priest in Europe, or a noble or a magistrate, who was not ridiculed? Was there a faithful husband or a chaste wife in France who was not ridiculed? I trow not."

To what shall such glaring inconsistencies be imputed? The world must account, and not I, for your paroxysms of rage, which frequently burst forth in the most indecent epithets, even towards your correspondent, who has been treated from her youth to nearly the age of fourscore with every mark of delicacy, respect, and affection, by every worthy character with whom she has been acquainted; and she has seldom associated with any one who did not deserve the same returns of kindness and consideration from herself.

I need not adduce any other proofs of your fall from decency and dignity than to remind you of your own details. . . . .

These things are sufficient to lead me to wish to close this correspondence, lest it should again cause a blush in the face of age, though not for herself, yet for Mr. Adams, who, with his abilities and apparent regard to moral obligation, should put such proofs into my hands that he is capable of the lowest and most affrontive ribaldry to a

lady who for many years he addressed, not only in the most respectful, but even adulatory strain. He certainly must have forgotten that he once thus addressed the same lady: —

"MADAM, — I remember that Bishop Burnet, in a letter he once wrote to Lady Rachel Russell, the virtuous daughter of the great Southampton, and unfortunate wife of Lord Russell, who died a martyr to English liberties, says, 'Madam, I never attempt to write to you but my pen, conscious of its inferiority, falls out of my hand.' The polite prelate did not write to that excellent lady in so bold a figure with half the sincerity that I could apply it to myself when writing to Mrs. Warren."

The above, and many other letters of the same style and tenor, are deposited where they may be brought into use, if necessity should require it, in some future day.

It is not strange that Mr. Adams's diffidence and trepidation should have worn off by time; but it is wonderful that he should have lost all sense of decency and politeness due to the sex, even where there is no friendship, by a temporary residence in the polite schools of European courts.

But as this is proved by his letters, from the 11th of July, through all his subsequent pages, I am under the painful necessity of continuing to remark on his affrontive paragraphs.

In yours of August 3d, you have told Mrs. Warren that she "has exposed herself to eternal ridicule by her very lady-like insinuations and assertions."

Must not this be very alarming to an author as well as to a woman of sensibility and delicacy? On what point of ridicule would Mrs. Warren's character stand, were she to write her History over again, and correct her *errors*, as you seem to wish her to do, by contradicting her former assertions? She must tell the world that Mr. Adams was

no monarchist; that he had no partiality for the habits, manners, or government of England; that he was a man of fashion, that his polite accomplishments rendered him completely qualified for the refinements of Parisian taste; that he had neither frigidity nor warmth of temper, that his passions were always on a due equipoise; that he was beloved by every man, woman, and child in France; that he had neither ambition nor pride of talents, and that he "had no talents to be proud of;" that he was never hated by courtiers and partisans, nor thwarted by the Count de Vergennes, but that this minister and himself were always on the most cordial terms; that he was a favorite of the administrators of the affairs of France; that they loved him for his yielding, compliant temper and manners; that he was always a republican, though he has asserted there was no possibility of understanding or defining the term republicanism; that in France he was always happy; that in England he suppressed the American insurrections by the defence of their Constitutions; that his writings suppressed rebellion, quelled the insurgents, established the State and Federal Constitutions, and gave the United States all the liberty, republicanism, and independence they enjoy; that his name was always placed at the head of every public commission; that nothing had been done, that nothing could be done, neither in Europe nor America, without his sketching and drafting the business, from the first opposition to British measures in the year 1764 to signing the treaty of peace with England in the year 1783.

Mr. Adams might indeed think this a very pleasant portrait, but I doubt whether the world would receive it as a better likeness than the one drawn in the "copious stream of Mrs. Warren's historical eloquence," which appears to be so unacceptable to Mr. Adams.

I have it under your own hand that nothing was done, either in England or France, but by your efforts. You

say in the letter before me, page 12th: "For the whole time I was in the Commission with Franklin and Lee, I did the whole business of it. Luckily, I have in my possession the original letter-book of the Commissioners. It is a folio, and pretty full. Every letter in it but two was written by my hand, and appears in my handwriting. If Mrs. Warren will make me a visit, I will show her this book."

I have neither health nor inclination to make such a visit for such a purpose; but, if Mr. Adams will make me a visit, I will do all in my power consistent with conscience to soothe his wounded feelings and to restore his friendly disposition towards those with whom he ought never to have been at enmity.

When I revised my History for the press, which I often did, I aimed to make it a concise and just narrative of facts, and to give a correct, and not a labored, detail of character. I had neither time, inclination, nor abilities to search all the diplomatic Commissions or Resolves of Congress, any further than was relevant to the concise sketch of character and events, the original plan of the work.

In these short personal sketches, I omitted many things that might have been said relative to yourself as well as to many, very many, worthy characters who acted a noble part through the Revolutionary struggle. But, though I omitted very many things that might have been said, I do not recollect, to use your own expression, "upon my faith and honor," I ever penned a line that I did not know, or believe upon very substantial grounds, to be literally and sacredly true.

MERCY WARREN.

No. 7.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, August 8, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — More demonstrations of your friendship for Mr. Adams appear in the 229th page of the third volume. The same disposition to wink him out of sight, to represent him in an odious light, to lessen and degrade him below his station, which runs through every part of your History in which he appears, is very visible here again: —

"Mr. John Adams had left Holland, and joined the plenipotentiaries of the United States, previous to the agreement on provisional articles for peace, signed November (you should have known it was the thirtieth), 1782."

I was engaged in Holland in very diligent service, in order to complete a treaty and negotiate a loan. The treaty was an unwieldy business. It must be conducted by me in English, and by a large committee from all the seven provinces in Dutch. When any proposition was made by me, it was in English; but it was expected, and would have been insisted on, that the English should be accompanied with a translation into Dutch or French. There were some gentlemen among the Dutch whose opinions must be consulted, whose disposition was to retard rather than accelerate. When any proposition was made by me, I must first write it in English, then translate it, or get it translated, then have it copied and sent. When the answer or a counter proposition or project came to me, it was in Dutch.

I understood not enough of this language to depend on my own construction of it; consequently, must procure it to be translated into French or English. These projects and counter projects, and these translations in various languages, occasioned a delay that was as pleasing to the

English and Stadtholderian party as it was irksome and inconvenient to me.

The manœuvres concerning the loan, in which I was thwarted and embarrassed by the French, as much as in the treaty I was by the English party, the points and questions which were started by these able negotiators,—gave me a great deal of trouble, and occasioned long delays.

The loan was of great importance to my country, and occasioned also much trouble and delay. I was loth to leave these important objects unfinished. On the other hand, a Latin Commission from the King of England appeared in Paris to treat of peace; but no notice was taken of America, except under the vague general style of France, Spain, and any other States. A copy of this was sent to me. I wrote to my colleagues that I would treat with England under no such Commission, that I would not leave the business I was engaged in till a Commission should appear to treat with *the United States of America* as well as with France, Spain, and Holland. Another Commission was sent over to Paris and communicated to me, still without an acknowledgment of the *United States of America*. I wrote again to my colleagues that I would not go to Paris to meet any such Commission. It was trifling with us. As soon as a Commission should appear to treat with the United States of America, I would leave all my engagements in Holland and fly to Paris, but not before. At last, a Commission to Mr. Oswald appeared to treat with the United States of America. The moment I received it, I acquainted my Dutch negotiators that our treaty must be finished and signed immediately, or not at all; for my presence was indispensable at Paris. The treaty was immediately finished and signed, and I was in Paris as soon as post horses could carry me. When I arrived in Paris, nothing was done. Franklin would agree with Jay in nothing. Mr. Jay had drawn up a memorial to the French

Minister, a very able paper, to convince him that we ought not to treat but with a Commission acknowledging the United States a belligerent power. Franklin would not sign it. Franklin and his satellites insinuated about that Mr. Jay was a lawyer, and addicted to disputation, &c. Immediately after my arrival in Paris, Mr. Jay communicated to me all that had passed, enumerated all his embarrassments, stated to me the principles on which he had acted; that Mr. Franklin would agree with him in nothing; that he had sketched a plan of a treaty, but that nothing had been done, and nothing discussed. I told him the principles on which he had acted were the same on which I had insisted during the whole time that I had been alone in the Commission; that the Count de Vergennes knew it, for I had communicated them to him in writing at the time of the proposed mediation of the two imperial courts; that I approved of every step he had taken, and that he might depend upon it I would pursue the system to the end. The next day I went out to Passy, and spent part of the day with Dr. Franklin. I wished to know his sentiments, but not a word could I get out of him. Solemn, frigid silence on the subject of our public affairs, merry and pleasant enough about trifles and tittle-tattle. In the end, I told him that I had conversed fully with Mr. Jay, approved every step he had taken, and should proceed with him throughout upon the same principles which he knew I had always professed and maintained towards the French, considering myself as a servant of the nation, totally independent of England, upon an equal footing with her, and as independent of France as of England. The old politician said nothing! But, when the first conferences were opened a day or two after, he turned to his colleagues, and said, "I will go on with you, and treat without consulting the court, and the rather because they communicate nothing to us."

All the reason and address of Mr. Jay had never been

able to bring him to this; but, when he saw that two could and would make a treaty without him, he thought that would make an ill sound in America, and Europe too.

"He was no favorite of the officers and administrators of the Gallican Court." What then? Was Mr. Lee, Mr. Izard, or Mr. Jay, a favorite? They loved their country better than France: so did I. No American minister ever was a favorite but Mr. Deane and Mr. Franklin, and by this time, at least, you know the reason of it. It was no more nor less than a servile compliance with their intrigues, however absurd, unjust, and ruinous to the honor and interest of America. "His manners were not adapted to render him acceptable in that refined and polished nation." My manners again? Why am I singled out to be stigmatized as a clown? Because Mrs. Warren has a particular spite against me, the cause of which shall be investigated in its proper place. In the mean time, I affirm that the assertion is false. My manners were as acceptable and as well accepted as those of any American who ever resided in France in a public character. "Nor did he appear to have much partiality for or confidence in them." He certainly never had any partiality for them from his cradle to this day. Had he indulged any partiality for them in his public station, he would have violated his duty, and justly forfeited the esteem of his country. "Or confidence in them;" in the King he had the utmost confidence, believing him a sincere, cordial friend to America, and desiring nothing but justice and good faith from us, and determined to act with justice, good faith, and generosity, too, towards us.

In the Count de Vergennes I had no confidence at all, believing him to be fixed in designs to deprive us of our fisheries and half our territory; to prevent our connections with Spain, Holland, and all other countries, if he could, that we might be made as dependent on France as possible; and to sow the seeds of eternal discord with England par-

ticularly, by preventing a treaty of commerce between us. That I was right in this belief is fully proved by a thousand facts; but Mr. Marbois' letter, and the "Politique des Cabinets," have placed it beyond all doubt with the present age and posterity. You have slided over Mr. Franklin in page 230 too softly and smoothly for an impartial historian. A feather often shows which way the wind blows. An exemplification of this light proverb is in the 231st page. "David Hartley, Esq., on the part of Great Britain, and Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, and John Adams, Esquires, in behalf of America, affixed their names and seals to the treaty." How could this historical departure from all my Commissions, from our joint Commission, and from the treaty itself, have happened? You know or ought to have known, before you attempted to write such a History, that I had been alone in the Commission for more than a year before Mr. Franklin or Mr. Jay had any relation to it; that I had been employed in various negotiations under it, in which I had established all the principles upon which a majority of the new Commissioners finally acted. You knew that I was placed by my sovereign at the head of the new Commission, that I acted as the head of it through all the conferences, and in the final conclusion signed and sealed it, before all the other ministers. Yet, in your impartial History, you are pleased to place both Franklin and Jay before me. This discovers such a want of candor, such a wilful departure from the most authentic documents of History, public records, that I can account for it only by a spirit of inveterate bitterness against me, and a determined resolution, right or wrong, to strip me of all my laurels. You will say, no doubt, this is "sighing for rank." Very well: say so, Mrs. Warren. Make the most of it. But I say it is not sighing for rank. You may call it boasting of rank, with more color. But why should not I blazon my escutcheon as well as Mrs. Warren hers? But, to be

sober, I deny that it is boasting of rank. Mrs. Warren boasts that her brother (and consequently herself) was equal to any one in the State in point of birth. In the name of all heraldry and all common sense, is not birth rank, — at least as much as precedency in a procession? And yet your co-patriots will contend for this as sharply as the Apostles debated the question which should be greatest.

In delineating the character and painting the complexion of this transaction, I would appeal to Thucydides, Plutarch, Livy, or Tacitus, whether this circumstance was not essential to be remarked, to show the real character of all my colleagues; of the Count de Vergennes and his myrmidons, among whom were Deane and twenty others, among whom was even Paul Jones; of myself, and above all of Congress. The unbiassed judgment, the spontaneous volition, the natural feeling and affection of Congress, had selected me from all the other candidates to negotiate peace and commerce alone.

My despatches had almost daily arrived to them, giving them an account of every step of my progress: of my passage in a leaky ship, four-and-twenty days on the point of sinking; of my journey through Spain, which was worse than a campaign in the field; of my journey through France, and my conduct at Paris and Versailles; of my journey to Holland, and all my conduct there. After all this, all the intrigues of De Vergennes and Franklin, Deane, and all his friends, and all the influence of De la Luzerne and Marbois, could not carry Franklin nor Jay, Jefferson nor Laurens, to the head of the new Commission. Jay had been President of Congress, Jefferson had been Governor of Virginia, Laurens had been President of Congress, Franklin had been I never knew what in politics; yet all these interests could not carry any one to the head of this new Commission but John Adams. Congress, to their honor,

had then the integrity, candor, and fortitude to resist all influence, and refuse to disgrace, degrade, or discourage a man who had been the first object of their choice, whose whole conduct they approved, and who they knew had run the gauntlet through burning ploughshares, between ranks of janizaries armed with scorpions, and reached the goal without a scratch upon his foot or a sting or a scar upon his back. Now, Madam, call this vanity; call it pride of talent, or call it, as some of your French friends call all moral principle, the "vanity of human virtue." You are welcome, Madam, to make the severest use of it in your power. You knew, Madam, and General Warren knew, that in those times I had much more of the confidence of Congress, and of all the most intelligent and disinterested people in America who had any access to the secret of affairs, than Franklin. Congress had seen Franklin and me together before them above a year, *i. e.* from May, 1775, to the autumn of 1776. They had seen me active and alert in every branch of business, both in the House and on committees, constantly proposing measures, supporting those I approved when moved by others, opposing such as I disapproved, discussing and arguing on every question. On the contrary, they had seen Franklin, from day to day, sitting in silence, a great part of his time fast asleep in his chair. He was employed on committees, more in compliance with the prejudices of the people in Europe and America, than for any use he was of, or any service he performed. Congress had seen my despatches from Europe, and compared them with those of Franklin. They had distinguished mine with high applause on many occasions, Franklin's never.

In page 250, you say that "in 1783 interested and ambitious men endeavored to confound ideas and darken opinion, by asserting that republicanism was an indefinite term." This is news to me. I thought my enemies had agreed to impute all this to me. I was not here, and did

not return till five years afterwards. But, whoever asserted it in 1783, I asserted in print in 1786, and have frequently asserted it since, in conversation and in public; and I now most solemnly repeat it, and you, Mrs. Warren, and General Warren too, know it to be true. Ask your friend, Mr. Speaker Morton, ask any other man of sense and learning, of your party throughout the nation, and if he answers at all, and has any regard to his character, he must say the same thing. Fraud lurks in generals. There is not a more unintelligible word in the English language than republicanism. Neither yourself, nor the General, have ever condescended to commit yourselves to any definition of it, and I venture to say you dare not attempt it to this hour. Do you mean by republicanism a government in a single house of representatives, exercising all legislative, executive, and judiciary functions, without a governor, or senate, or permanent judges? I presume to say you dare not say this. Do you mean a mixed government of a senate and house without a governor? I believe you will not say this. Do you mean a governor, senate, house, and judges, as they are in this State? If you do, I agree with you in all your republicanism. This is my republicanism, and I was the father of it in this State in 1779. But, if you agree to this now, it is but very lately that you would avow it.

Your thirty-first chapter, Madam, is like mustard after dinner, as our friends the French say; or like the volunteer toast after a feast, when the original list is exhausted. After the termination of the Revolutionary War, your subject was completed. I have no objection, however, to follow you. The same good-will to me appears in the supplement as in the body of the work. Not the least notice is taken of my repeated elections as Vice-President, nor of a laborious discharge of the very arduous duties of that office for eight years. Three successive elections, two as Vice-President and one as President,

might have convinced you that the people did not believe the falsehoods that were fabricated concerning my monarchical or aristocratical biasses, which you have so unjustly countenanced. Nay, I presume to say that the people do not believe them at this hour. No, it was not until twelve years had passed, and a ruthless host of liars and libellers had been hired, like mercenary Hessians and Anspackers, to conquer America, to propagate every species of slander in newspapers, pamphlets, hand-bills, and by secret spies, emissaries, and agents throughout the Union. And, after all, Colonel Burr and Alexander Hamilton effected the revolution. Do you glory in the exploits of these virtuous men and pure republicans? Yes, I know you do. But even these heroes could not have effected it, if the election of South Carolina had been held in Charleston. Though New York and Pennsylvania had been turned by your determined republicans, Mr. Burr and Mr. McKean, I had an equal number of votes till you come to South Carolina. Shall I hint to you, Madam, a few of the plausible reports they propagated among the Germans in their own language, and among all the religious sectaries through the United States? They not only spread the splendid history of the alliance between the two royal houses of Adams and Guelph, and a thousand others explanatory and corroboratory of that probable invention, but that President Adams was determined to take away their lands and give them to the Yankees. Gentlemen of the best characters have informed me that in travelling the back parts of Pennsylvania they have heard a general mourning and grief and rage among the Germans, crying: "What a dreadful man this President Adams is! We came here from Germany many years ago. We have labored very hard, night and day. We have got a little land, some of us more, some less, some of us three or four thousand acres, perhaps, by our sweat; and now this cruel President Adams is going to take it all away from us, and give

it to them New England men." Other reports were spread among the religious men and sects, not only the German Lutherans and the German Calvinists, but all other denominations through the Union, — Catholic, Protestant Episcopalians, Methodists, Moravians, Anabaptists, Menonists, Quakers, &c. This was the decisive stroke of that infernal policy which decided the election. Among all the sources of my information on this head, I will select an anecdote which will give you a clear idea of it. When on my last journey to Washington I passed through Yorktown in Pennsylvania, where more than twenty years before I had sat some months in Congress, the people had been violently agitated by electioneering passions. I had scarcely sat down by the fireside at an inn where I was to sleep, before a German clergyman sent the landlord to me to desire the liberty of speaking to me. I prayed the landlord to introduce the gentleman without ceremony or a moment's delay. Behold the dialogue between us.

Domine. "I am the minister of a German church. My poor people are honest, but ignorant of the English language, and liable to be imposed on by artful and designing men. Many persons have come among us, and many papers in our language have been sent among us. My poor people come to me to ask me what they shall do. I have long wished to see you, though a stranger, that I might tell you what reports are sent among my poor Germans, and that I might ask you what truth there is in them."

Adams. "I thank you, sir, for your candor and frankness. Please to mention the reports, and I will answer to them with the same frankness and candor."

Minister. "They report that you made the Constitution of Massachusetts, and have had influence enough in that State to establish the Presbyterian religion, and make all other sects of Christians pay taxes for the support of it."

Adams. "I had a share in the Convention that formed the Constitution, but I did not draw the article respecting religion; but that article, as it is, obliges no man to pay to the support of any particular sect. Every man is at liberty to apply his taxes to the support of his own church and minister."

Minister. "Taxes, however, they are obliged to pay."

Adams. "Taxes for building churches and supporting ministers, with some limitations and exceptions that I am not certain that I remember, they are obliged to pay."

Minister. "Well, that is an establishment of Christianity." This was said with an arch and smiling countenance, which I understood very well to mean: I am very glad they have established Christianity, but I must not acknowledge it, because my people have been taught to believe that any establishment in Pennsylvania will be an establishment of Scotch Presbyterianism.

Adams. "What other reports, sir?"

Minister. "A great many, but foolish ones. I will mention one more. They say that you belonged to Dr. Priestley's church in England, and used to sit down to the Lord's table with him after hearing him preach against the Divinity of Christ."

Adams. "I never was in Dr. Priestley's church or meeting. I never heard him preach against the Divinity of Christ, and never received the communion with him as I remember."

Minister. "You cannot conceive, sir, how much distressed my poor Germans have been, nor how much anxiety and trouble I have had with them; but I am very glad to have seen you, for now I can speak from your own mouth."

This idea was propagated through the Union that I was a Presbyterian, that I was about to introduce an establishment of Presbyterianism, and compel all other denominations to pay taxes to the support of Presbyterian

ministers and churches; and a kind of continental synod, or general assembly, of Presbyterians, which was called at Philadelphia a little before this time, an innovation that alarmed all but Presbyterians, contributed infinitely to countenance these electioneering manœuvres. Upon the Catholics, I have reason to believe they had some effect. Upon the Protestant Episcopalians, they had little or none; for these had received too much countenance and assistance from me in Holland and England for them to believe that I was a bigoted Presbyterian, or that I would promote any establishment that would do injustice to them or any other denomination. With the Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, and Moravians, as well as the Dutch and German Lutherans and Calvinists, it had an immense effect, and turned them in such numbers as decided the election. They said, let us have an Atheist or Deist or any thing rather than an establishment of Presbyterianism.

. . . . . .

These are the principles, motives, and artifices that influence our elections, Madam. Of what avail is virtue, talents, services, in such scenes of corruption? What is this better than purchasing votes with money? When a nation is so nearly divided that the majority may be decided by a few thousands, a few hundreds, or sometimes even by a single vote, and this vote, or this hundred, or this thousand votes, can be obtained by such fabrications as these, bad men will be always sure of their elections, because they will employ such means without scruple, while good men will despise and abhor them.

There are scattered in various parts of your History, Madam, insinuations about titles and a titled nobility, &c., which I supposed were intended as sarcasms upon me.

I arrived from Europe on the 17th of June, 1788, soon after the adoption of the National Constitution by the State of Massachusetts. A title to be given to the President

when he should be chosen, and the government come into operation, was a common topic of conversation, whether it should be Excellency or any higher title. The first person that I remember to have heard propose a title was our present Governor, Mr. Sullivan. He said, when Congress should come together, they would have nothing to do (such was the form of his expression) but to give the President the title of "His Most Patriotic Majesty." After Congress were together, and Washington had arrived, and before his inauguration, I was informed that your correspondent, Mrs. Montgomery, had in a party of ladies and gentlemen taken the lead, and given to the President the title of "His Highness." After all this, the two Houses of Congress resolved that the President should be received in the senate chamber by the Vice-President. I arose from the chair, and respectfully asked the direction of the Senate by what style I should address him, — by the title of, Sir, Your Honor, Your Excellency, or any other. A senator arose, and moved that a committee should be appointed to consider what title should be affixed to the office. Mr. Richard Henry Lee, I think, was chairman of the committee; and he drew the report, made it to the House, and it was accepted by a large majority, among whom was Mr. Lee himself, and several others as determined republicans as any in the United States or in the world. The report gave the title of "His Highness" to the President. It was sent down to the House. There the members were more equally divided. Mr. Madison was in doubt what was best to be done. The repulsive force began to be felt between Madison and Hamilton. They had acted, contended, and written in concert, hitherto, in the formation, recommendation, and adoption, of the national Constitution. The moment was now arrived when they must divide. Washington should have appointed Madison Secretary of State when he appointed Hamilton Secretary of the Treasury. This would have continued the harmony between

them. Madison visited Washington to know his sentiments. I knew his sentiments before. He had conversed with me before on the subject, and I knew that his opinion was in favor of a title. I know not all that passed between Washington and Madison, because I was not present; but this I believe to be the truth from information that I ought to credit. Washington was far from expressing any disapprobation of a title, so far that he thought a decent title to the office to be useful and proper; but he wanted no title himself, and was convinced from what he heard in conversation, and read in the public papers, that if the title of Highness was given it would excite such a popular clamor that Congress would either be obliged to rescind it, or it would produce such a prejudice against the national government as would do more harm than good. Mr. Madison! Am I right in this? I appeal to you. If you contradict me, I will give it up. Mrs. Warren, if my countrymen choose to distinguish themselves from all other nations in trifles, while they are imitating them in essentials, I will not quarrel. If they would be pleased to pass a law that all magistrates, justices, judges, senators, governors, vice-presidents, and presidents shall be thee'd and thou'd as William Penn addressed King Charles and King James, I acquiesce. I have nothing to say against obedience to their sovereign will. But I will say that my obedience is implicit, and not voluntary. My opinion is unaltered. My opinion is that titles of office are useful in this country, in order to distinguish grades and facilitate subordination. Titles of office are very different from titles of nobility. Titles of office are not hereditary. Nor are they for life, unless by courtesy rather than custom; at least, in our country. The title of Your Worship, or Your Honor, or Your Excellency, is no mark of an hereditary nobility in any country; certainly not in this, any more than the title of Colonel, or Major-General. The title of Excellency is given in Europe to ambassadors, com-

manders-in-chief of armies or fleets, to governors of provinces, &c.; but none of these are hereditary. Excellency, Honor, established by the Constitution of Massachusetts, and even by law in Connecticut, are not hereditary titles. Nevertheless, I say, Go on, my dear countrymen, with the style of George Washington, John Adams, Tom Jefferson, Jemmy Sullivan, for your presidents, vice-presidents, and governors, if you will; but I will say to you that, in my humble, private opinion, your liberties will not be secured or your happiness promoted either by Quakerism or clownism. Imitate the Quakers in their virtues, not their oddities. After all, there is not a country under heaven in which titles and precedency are more eagerly coveted than in this country. The title of Excellency, and Honor, and Worship, of Councillor, Senator, Speaker, Major-General, Brigadier-General, Colonel, Lieutenant-Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, Ensign, Sergeant, Corporal, and even Drummer and Fifer, is sought with as furious zeal as that of Earl, Marquis, or Duke in any other country; and as many intrigues, and as much corruption in many cases, are used to obtain them. It was my intention when I began these letters, Mrs. Warren, to have avoided any observations at present on any parts of your History but such as have an immediate relation to myself. Indeed, I shall not depart entirely from this rule in saying something of Mr. Dana. He was appointed secretary of legation to my first Commissions to negotiate peace and commerce with Great Britain. His birth, his education, his connections, his information, his talents, his services as a member of Congress were such, and the friendship which had subsisted for many years between me and his father, and his uncle, Judge Trowbridge, and himself, had been such that I thought myself honored by his appointment and connection with me. An uninterrupted harmony and friendship was maintained between us during the whole time we were together in France and in Holland, and

after we were separated by Congress, and he was sent to Russia.

In the pages 301–305 of your second volume, you have taken notice of this gentleman in a manner that shows your want of information as well as impartiality. You say that the Empress of Russia only among the European nations refused peremptorily to receive any minister at her court under the authority of the Congress of the United States of America. The truth is that every power but France had refused. Spain had refused. The Empress of Germany had refused. The King of Prussia had once promised, but afterwards refused. The Grand Duke of Tuscany had refused. Holland had refused in reality. In short, every power of Europe to whom overtures had been made had refused. How then, in order to throw a slur upon Mr. Dana, could you make this assertion: "She did not even deign to see the person sent on by Congress." Did the King of Spain deign to see Mr. Lee? Did the Empress of Germany deign to see Mr. William Lee? Did the Grand Duke of Tuscany deign to see Mr. Izard? Did the States-General of the United Provinces deign to see me till they had explicitly acknowledged the independence of America? Did the King of France deign to see Mr. Deane, Mr. Arthur Lee, or even Dr. Franklin, till a treaty had been signed by his ministers? No: from December, 1776, to February, 1778, the Grand Franklin was obliged to skulk about in obscurity in Paris, never admitted to the presence of the King, Queen, or any branch of the royal family, nor to any of the Ministers of State, unless privately and in secret; and, in truth, very often under trepidations, lest he should be finally obliged to fly the country. Inquire, Madam, if you please, of the Secretary of this Commonwealth, Mr. Jonathan Loring Austin.

Mrs. Warren should have known more of the law of nations, the policy of governments, and the etiquette of

courts, before she hazarded assertions so dogmatically; and, indeed, before she attempted to write history. She should have known more of the facts in the case. The Empress of Russia and the Roman Emperor had offered their mediation to France, England, and Spain, in order to terminate the war and decide the questions between them; particularly, whether the United States of America were, or ought to be, British subjects or an independent State! That I may not mistake or misremember any circumstance, I will send you a copy of the following letters and minutes made at the time while I was still alone in the commission for peace: —

VERSAILLES, July 7, 1781. HÔTEL DE JOIE.

SIR, — I have the honor to inform your Excellency that, upon an intimation from you, signified to me by Mr. Beringer, and afterwards by the Duke de la Vauguyon, that the interests of the United States required me here. I arrived last night in Paris, and am come to-day to Versailles, to pay my respects to your Excellency and receive your farther communications. As your Excellency was in council when I had the honor to call at your office, and as it is very possible that some other day may be more agreeable, I have the honor to request you to appoint the time which will be most convenient for me to wait on you. I have the honor to be with great respect, sir, your

Most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

His Excellency the COMTE DE VERGENNES.

This letter I sent by my servant, who waited until the Comte descended from the council, when he delivered it into his hands. He broke the seal, read the letter, and said "he was sorry he could not see Mr. Adams, but he was obliged to go into the country immediately after dinner;" but that Mr. Adams *seroit dans le cas de voir* Mr.

de Rayneval (his first Under-Secretary of State), who lived at such a sign in the Rue St. Honoré. After dinner, I called on Mr. de Rayneval, who said: "M. le Duke de la Vauguyon has informed you that there is a question of pacification, under the mediation of the Emperor of Germany and the Empress of Russia; and it was necessary that you should have some consultations at leisure (*à loisir*) with the Comte de Vergennes, that we might understand each other's views. That he would see the Comte to-morrow morning, and write me when he would meet me. That they had not changed their principles nor their system, that the treaties were the foundation of all negotiation." I said that I lodged at the Hôtel de Valois, where I did formerly; that I should be ready to wait on the Comte when it would be agreeable to him, and to confer with him upon every thing relative to any propositions which the English might have made. He said the English had not made any propositions; but it was necessary to consider *certain points*, and make certain preparatory arrangements, to know *whether we were British subjects*, or in what light we were to be considered. I said I was not a British subject; that I had renounced that character many years ago for ever, and that I should rather be a fugitive in China or Malabar than ever reassume that character. He repeated that he would see the Comte in the morning, and write me when he would meet me.

You may easily suppose, Madam, that I was alarmed when I heard from the representative of the Comte de Vergennes that it was still a question with him whether we were British subjects, when we had declared five years before that we were not, and when the King of France, at least a year and a half before, had solemnly stipulated that we were not, and that we never should be. However, as Mr. Rayneval had recognized their principles, their system, and their treaties, I had little apprehension from the French. But I was more startled to find that the two imperial courts

were about to make a question, both about the effect of our Declaration of Independence and our treaties with France.

Mr. Rayneval, according to his promise, wrote me; and I returned him this answer: —

PARIS, July 9, 1781.

SIR, — I have, this moment, the honor of your billet of this day's date, and will do myself the honor to wait on his Excellency the Comte de Vergennes at his office on Wednesday next, at nine o'clock in the morning, according to his desire. I have the honor to be, with much esteem, sir, your humble and obedient servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

MR. RAYNEVAL.

I went to Versailles, and waited on the Comte accordingly. Mr. Rayneval was present. Every thing was conducted with perfect good humor and politeness. There was, however, a visible perplexity in the Comte's mind. At some times, he seemed resolved to show me all the propositions of the two imperial courts; at other times, he seemed to think that I ought to see only that, or part of that, which related to America. When he had shown me what he thought proper, I perceived what the points were which he wished me to consider: 1. Whether I would go to the Congress at Vienna, where the two imperial courts were to mediate or sit as umpires; 2. Whether I would appear there as a British subject, or in a doubtful character, to be decided by the umpires; 3. Whether I would consent to the meeting of such a Congress, whether I was to be in it or not; 4. Whether I would consent to the mediation or umpirage of the two imperial courts. In language the most temperate and measured, both in conversation and by several letters, I explained myself to the Comte: that I would go to Vienna, if the Comte de Vergennes should advise me to such a journey; that I could not appear there as a British subject, nor in an equivocal char-

acter; that I could not consent to any Congress, unless I was to be admitted in it as a minister plenipotentiary of the United States and an independent sovereignty; that I could consent to no mediation or umpirage until the independence of my country was acknowledged by Great Britain as well as by the two imperial courts, and by all other courts whose ambassadors were to be admitted to the Congress; that I could enter into no conferences or explanations with any minister from any power, until that minister had shown me a full power to treat with the minister of the United States of America, and exchanged copies of full powers with me. To detail all our conversations and conferences upon these points, and send you copies of my letters to the Comte upon this occasion, would be too tedious and is unnecessary. Those were the principles on which Mr. Jay and I insisted fifteen months afterwards, until a full power arrived to Mr. Oswald exactly in the form that we contended for, after two attempts had been made to evade us, and two Commissions which we reprobated sent back to England, though the Comte de Vergennes would fain have had us treat under them, and Dr. Franklin united with the Count de Vergennes.

This, Madam, will be sufficient, I hope, to explain to you the principle on which the Empress Catherine acted in refusing to receive Mr. Dana. She could not have received him, and been consistent with herself. Mr. Dana, however, was uniformly treated in that country with personal respect and civility, and was promised to be received in his public character as soon as England should acknowledge the independence of America, and was upon the point of being received and of making a treaty, when suddenly the intrigues of Vergennes and Franklin with the members of Congress effected his recall. In short, to consider the conduct of Vergennes and Franklin from first to last, it would seem as if the former had sworn an eternal separation between America and all Europe except

France, and the latter eternal hatred against every virtuous man and faithful servant of his country.

Mr. Dana was placed in no more "unpleasant predicament" than every American minister in Europe had been placed in, in every other country, even in France. Instead of "being at a loss what further steps to take," Mr. Dana was at no loss at all. He knew that he had nothing more to do but to wait till Great Britain had acknowledged our independence; and, instead of returning to America voluntarily, he did not give up his fair prospect of success in his embassy till he was recalled by Congress; for the ill-will of Vergennes and Franklin had not been able to starve him out, as they intended. He had now a friend in me, and a resource in my resources in Holland.

The note at the bottom of this page, Mrs. Warren, makes me blush for you. The "Scandalous Chronicle" says that the grand autocratrice had "an animal weakness," as a great lady of my acquaintance once expressed it to me, that she had sometimes conversed with strangers from other motives than curiosity or policy, but not publicly. She had never, that we hear or read of, acknowledged the independence of a new nation for the sake of such interviews. I blush for my country too. A certain native of America, who had been, as he thought, a great man in Europe, and who thought himself, and was thought by some others, to be the handsomest man in the world, both in face and figure, as well as the man of the most polished manners and irresistible address, — this gentleman made a voyage or a journey, or both, to Petersburg, in hopes of obtaining an audience of the autocratrice *for the benefit of his country*. But the lady was as cold as marble. Neither the face nor the figure nor the address could procure a glance or an ogle from her.

There is in this page, Madam, a manifest allusion, though colored and covered with too much art for an historian, to what I am as much ashamed as you to explain. Mr. Dana,

I presume, was not mortified that his face, figure, and address did not procure him such an audience. Besides, it is generally understood that the Empress was too much of a statesman to be influenced in politics by such audiences and interviews. She too much resembled her great example, Elizabeth of England.

In page 302d, you say "it was doubted by many whether Mr. Dana was qualified," though "an attorney of eminence." Why an attorney? Why not a barrister? "He had neither the address, the penetration, the knowledge of courts or the human character necessary for a negotiator," &c. Who, in the name of astonishment, in all America, at that time had a knowledge of courts? Franklin alone had resided in England as a despised and scorned agent at the Court of St. James's. In address and good breeding, he was excelled by very few Americans. In France and in Holland, where he lived with me, I know that his manners, address, learning, knowledge, and good sense were acknowledged by all who conversed with him. If by "address" you mean graceful attitudes and elegant motions and gestures, he had received as genteel an education as any man in America; if you mean a civil and polite conversation, he was, at least, equal to any American then in Europe.

"It requires equanimity of temper and true greatness of soul to command or retain the respect of great statesmen and politicians." Where did Mrs. Warren learn this great mystery? Has Mrs. Warren been in courts, and acquainted with great statesmen? When? Where? Oxenstiern, who had been acquainted, said to his son, "Go and see by what kind of men this world is governed." But, if equanimity of temper and greatness of soul were necessary, Mr. Dana had them in all his negotiations and public transactions in Europe, as far as I knew or ever heard, in as great a degree as any man.

Indeed, the diplomatic corps and ministers of state in

Europe are generally men of so much good humor and good breeding that one has no provocation or excuse for being otherwise with them. Even when some of them endeavor to cheat you, they do it with an external civility.

I am weary and ashamed of commenting on this monstrous perversion of truth and decorum, in this bitter satire upon a gentleman who is now living in retirement, after having filled the office of Chief Justice of the State of Massachusetts for, I believe, eighteen years after his return from Europe. In the science of jurisprudence and in general information, he was unquestionably equal to any chief justice who had ever sat upon that seat. The purity, integrity, and impartiality of his administration, has never been impeached or questioned even by his enemies. It is therefore highly reprehensible in any woman or man in the world to publish such an envenomed satire, under the grave title of a History.

Still in hopes of receiving justice and some reasonable satisfaction for the injuries you have done me, I still subscribe myself your friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN.

No. 5.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, Mass., Aug. 15, 1807.

JOHN ADAMS, ESQ.

You begin your letter, sir, of August 8th, with complaints of "new demonstrations of Mrs. Warren's friendship." Indeed, I cannot see the smallest foundation of complaint from page 229, Vol. III., of the Revolutionary History, to signing the treaty with Great Britain, page 232, that could give cause for the smallest umbrage, except the inadvertency of placing the names of Benjamin Franklin and John Jay before that of John Adams. This might

have happened from the carelessness of the author, rather than from any particular reasons in her mind at the time. But this I very well remember, that when I observed that Mr. Adams was no favorite of the officers and administrators of affairs at the Gallican court, and that his manners were not adapted to render him acceptable in that refined and polished nation, or that he did not appear to have much partiality for or confidence in them, I meant to convey to my readers an honorable idea of his impartiality, republicanism, and independence: this the subsequent part of the paragraph proves.

Angry as you have appeared in your late correspondence, your integrity or industry, your moral or religious character, has never been impeached; and, when the impartiality of history required any observation on political delinquency, your change of opinion has been imputed to the dictates of conscience, which may sometimes be misguided where there are the best intentions.

But the greatest characters will sometimes stoop to trivial observations, when their irritability is wrought up by groundless suspicions.

You ask, page 4th of the letter under consideration: "Why am I singled out to be stigmatized as a clown?" You answer yourself in the next line, "Because Mrs. Warren has a particular spite against me, the cause of which shall be investigated in its proper place." I can patiently wait your time for investigation. If you are conscious of any cause for any particular *spite* against you, I should not wonder if you were wounded by the recollection. I have never felt any *particular spite* against you or any other person; but, if you are sensible that you have been guilty of any thing that might have wounded my sensibility, I forgive you. If you are satisfied with yourself for inserting in the next line that my observation was "false," it will be no proof of the correctness of your manners, or exculpate you from the imputation of *clownism*.

A gentleman, or a man of generous feelings, could never have charged a writer with "bitter inveteracy against him, a wilful departure from the most authentic records of history, and a determined resolution, right or wrong, to strip him of all his laurels," for the trivial circumstance of placing his name below his brother negotiators.

I pass over the several subsequent pages, and allow you the full enjoyment of your rank, of which you observe, in one of your letters, "neither Jay, Jefferson, Laurens, Franklin, or any other, could rob you, nor carry any other man to the head of the new Commission but John Adams." You observe, "Congress, to their honor, had then the integrity, candor, and fortitude to resist all influence, and refuse to disgrace, degrade, or discourage a man who had been the first object of their choice, and whose whole conduct they had approved." You go on, sir, with a long list of your dangers, difficulties, and escapes, of which we had before heard, of your meritorious services, both in Congress and in Europe: for these you have been justly respected by your country, by General Warren and by Mrs. Warren, who, you say, "knew that in those times I had much more of the confidence of Congress and of all the most intelligent and disinterested people in America who had any access to the secrets of affairs than Franklin." After this, follows a philippic against the aged Doctor, in which you censure the old gentleman for sometimes dropping to sleep amidst the multifarious discussions of a very respectable body of men, who had each his own opinions and his own system.

It was not the design of my historic work to write a panegyric on your life and character, though fully sensible of your virtues and your services. You may do that yourself in some future memoir, as I observe you contemplate writing your own life, and, however largely you may expatiate on your superior abilities or services, I will not charge you with "vanity," — I will not say it was "*pride*

of talents," — I will not even say "it is the vanity of human virtue," as you assert "some of my French friends call all moral principle." I wish you would point out to me who my French friends are? I never knew that I had a friend in that nation. You might also, if you had pleased, have explained any of their maxims which you quote. I am not enough acquainted with their meaning to have adopted any of them.

It is very true that I have said in page 250 that "interested and ambitious men endeavored to confound ideas and darken opinion, by asserting that republicanism was an indefinite term." The observation was true, and you very well know, sir, though you were absent several years, that there were interested and ambitious men in your country, before, and in, and after, the termination of war, and that many of them had sufficient pride of talents and confidence in their own opinions to broach such sentiments, before I ever suspected that Mr. Adams had said, or would say, that "republicanism might mean any thing or nothing." What your enemies had agreed to impute to you, I know not. At the time referred to above, I was certainly your friend; and, several years after, the remains of that friendship, and the delicacy of my own feelings, prevented me from charging you with such an assertion, though after your return from Europe it was often reported. Such an expression, and its subsequent confirmation from such a man as Mr. Adams, must naturally confound the ideas and darken the opinions of the people, whose feelings had been flattered, that it was no chimera that a pure republic might exist, — that it was not an undefinable idea, but that they had thought themselves far advanced in the establishment of such a system. Twenty years ago, I should not have hesitated to explain my own meaning when you asked it on any subject; but so much perversion as I have recently experienced from you, on every expression of mine, is a sufficient reason why I should not further attempt to define

the word Republicanism to Mr. Adams. Thus have I answered for myself, but am yet of the opinion that, notwithstanding your challenge, General Warren would *dare* to give you his ideas of a republican government, or a correct answer to any other question you should *condescend* to ask him.

The supplementary chapter, after the completion of the rise and progress of the Revolutionary War, you say is "like mustard after dinner." Perhaps mustard after dinner is not more disgusting to any palate than the vinegar and nitre which so plentifully seasons all your pages while writing in the "spirit of friendship." But the resentment expressed seems principally to arise from the neglect of the writer to dilate on the honors done you by your country. Your abilities and your exertions have frequently been acknowledged by myself, in a manner sufficient to gratify the most ambitious of men.

It is true you have been frequently elected to high office, notwithstanding which the people suspected your aristocratic and monarchic biasses, though they were not generally and fully convinced of this solemn truth until after your elevation to the Presidential chair.

Many of your friends were earlier convinced that a change of opinion had taken place in your mind, and silently regretted the marked and uniform preference to monarchic usages discoverable, without your own confessions. In a more elevated station, clearer convictions appeared that you had no aversion to introducing the modes and forms of arbitrary systems of government, which they never wished to see adopted in America; much less to see them riveted on posterity by the hereditary and ancestral claims of a new-born nobility. A diadem and a sceptre are powerful temptations to any one who thinks himself the "greatest man in America;" and could such a one resist the charms of a crown, if the way was properly prepared?

It was necessary this should be done by the general voice and consent of the people. A revolution of opinion was effected, of which you complain, and charge General Hamilton and Colonel Burr with the guilt of bringing this forward in conjunction with a swarm of "liars and libellers." You then ask Mrs. Warren if she "gloried in the exploits of these virtuous men and pure republicans," and then answer yourself, "Yes, I know you do." Prompt decision this!

You have named three gentlemen in your opprobrious charges of effecting a revolution which reduced you to private life, with whom Mrs. Warren never had the smallest acquaintance, though she very well knew the characters of them all. From Colonel Hamilton there was little to fear, until you placed him after Washington at the head of your standing army. Mr. Burr I never held in high consideration, and regretted that he had an opportunity of introducing so much confusion in Congress at the memorable era when your party so strenuously exerted themselves to place him in the Presidential chair. Was it not your adherents and partisans who would have plunged the country in a civil war, rather than Mr. Jefferson should have been elected the first magistrate of the United States?

They would have placed Mr. Burr in that dignified station; but, though he was really possessed of talents, he was never esteemed by those you denominate my "party" as sufficiently qualified to get up to one of the first officers in the state. Yet his countrymen never apprehended much danger from him, until he, too, thought himself qualified to usurp and wear a crown. Of Governor McKean's real character or designs I have been less informed.

Your anecdotes of the German clergyman, and the apprehensions of the German boors that the choice of the President of the United States lay between an atheist and a presbyter, are new to me, and I think them all as improb-

able as your next anecdote. . . . Such things as these, you assert, "are the principles, motives, and artifices that influence our elections," and ask "of what avail is virtue, talents, services, in such scenes of corruption." Is not this a severe libel on your country? Nor is it a singular one: you have in several parts of your late correspondence stigmatized the Americans as a very corrupt people.

You next observe that there are scattered in various parts of Mrs. Warren's History "insinuations about titles and a titled nobility, &c., which I supposed were intended as a sarcasm upon me." From what possible source could you infer that these observations were designed as a sarcasm upon you? Did you suppose there was no other man in America equally emulous of rank and title with yourself? Or were you in expectation that the first, the most exalted, and sweetest fruits of those royal institutions and privileged distinctions must be reaped by yourself and your favorites? Whenever those reflections have occurred in the History with which you are so much disgusted, they were the result of the author's cool reflections on the danger a young country was in, just relieved from a long war. In such a country, which appeared to be laying aside their simple habits, and from a connection with foreign nations and an association with foreign officers seemed to be hankering after the modes, distinctions, and ranks of the servants of European despots, was it not obvious that dangers would thicken? There were a number of military characters of high pretensions on one side, and on the other very many characters in civil life, dignified by their own virtues, and perhaps all possessed of an equal share of pride and an equal claim to those hereditary distinctions.

There certainly was at that time a great number of aspiring characters that might have created domestic difficulties, if not a domestic war, for the sake of acquiring

a nominal distinction and an assumed right to domination from the tinkling of a sonorous title. You say yourself that "even the good and great Washington was fond of a title; and, when His Highness was fixed upon as the most appropriate, he expressed no disapprobation." Nor will any one deny that there were many others at that time who were eager expectants of a harvest of honor, as well as wealth, both in military and civil departments, who were fanning the fond idea that their merits, too, had entitled them to this feather in their cap. Why, then, do you claim this *sneer*, if it was one, as properly due only to yourself?

You go on next in order with an assurance that, when you began the extraordinary series of letters in my hands, you intended "to have avoided any observations at present on any part of your History but such as had an immediate relation to myself." "At present," — this is a threat often repeated in your letters: what you have in your storehouse of *thunderbolts* I am yet at a loss to conjecture, and what you can mean by your dark allusions it is not possible for me to understand.

Though I am fatigued with your repetition of abuse, I am not intimidated, even should it extend to all the characters an impartial historian has thought proper to name. Where I was personally acquainted, I have never thought myself mistaken in any of the traits of character I have sketched. What has been related in conversation or from other means of information, I had the highest reason to suppose was correct.

If you had added six pages more relative to the American agent or agency, I should not think myself amenable to you for any thing said of Mr. Dana or his mission to the Grand Autocratrix of Russia. His character is known to his countrymen, and, whether his talents were more conspicuous on the bench of justice or as a diplomatist, they will judge; and whether his mission was defeated by the

intrigues of the Count de Vergennes, Dr. Franklin, or Sir James Harris, is not very material.

No immorality has been recorded of him in any page, nor any "envenomed satire" designed under the "grave title of a History," by Mrs. Warren. Mr. Dana is now retired: she wishes he may enjoy happiness through the present life, and a due preparation for the next.

As you seem to have almost run out the thread of self-eulogium, you may, perhaps, for want of other matter, continue to reproach and affront a writer whose sex alone ought to have protected her from the grossness of your invectives. For this purpose, you may have taken up the defence of your friend Dana, who does not from any thing I have said of him appear to require your interference.

Nothing further need be adduced in evidence of your disposition than the indelicacy of your insinuations in your comment on the note in page 304, Vol. II., of the History under consideration. There you say, "The note at the bottom of this page, Mrs. Warren, makes me blush for you." If your modesty was a little more consistent, you would have spared the recital of what you say you have met with in some "Scandalous Chronicle," confirmed by some great lady, relative to the weaknesses of the Grand Autocratrix. What was your design, your feelings, or your ideas, in bringing forward these obscene allusions, I cannot possibly conjecture. It might have been expected that the purity of your mind would have turned disgusted from them, and that your cheek would really have cindered when you made an effort to bring into contact any thing so vulgar and indecent with a line ever written by Mrs. Warren. Surely, it must be a cankered heart as well as a jaundiced eye that can discover any thing in that note inconsistent with purity or rectitude of heart.

I have six times read over a page in the same letter without comprehending its meaning, or understanding the ground or the drift of such an abusive clause as the fol-

lowing: "There is in this page, Madam, a manifest allusion, though colored and covered with too much art for an historian, to what I am as much ashamed as you to explain."

I challenge any man of common understanding, any woman of delicacy, or any genius of the deepest penetration, to find an expression or a word that wants explanation, or an *artful allusion* colored or covered through the whole page, unbecoming to my sex. And sure I am there has never been a thought in my heart that I was ashamed to express whether it related to person or opinion.

Nor can I more readily investigate the design of the story, or the character of the person, his errand to Russia, or your *delicate* observations thereon, which are to be found at the top of the 17th page of your letter of August 8th; but the result drawn is that you are ashamed of your country. On this dark tale I have nothing to say, as I know nothing about it; but as you seem to be in a blushing mood, while you "blush for Mrs. Warren," while you "blush for your country," I advise you to add one item more, and blush for yourself.

I now wish to be relieved from a correspondence so repugnant to my feelings, and that I shall not be obliged longer to make extracts from yours and observations thereon, which must of necessity be disadvantageous to the character of a gentleman I have always wished to respect, notwithstanding his political opinions may, in some part of his life, have deviated from some of the best and wisest of his friends.

My feeble health forbids too much exertion, and the abuse as well as the prolixity of your very extraordinary correspondence since the 11th of July is fatiguing indeed. I have long wished to lay aside all political attentions as well as other cares, that are not only oppressive, but viewed by me as a waste of time at my advanced period. I would now take leave, with my sincere wishes for your tranquil-

lity in retirement and felicity in future, even though you should tell me, as you have frequently done before, that there is not a single word of truth in the assertion of your once respected friend,

M. Warren.

No. 8.

JOHN ADAMS TO MERCY WARREN.

Quincy, August 15, 1807.

Dear Madam, — In order to give you all the authentic documents necessary to explain the remarks I have made upon your History, I have omitted to give you copies of one or two Commissions which I intended to have transcribed in their places. One of them is in these words: —

"The United States of America in Congress assembled, to all to whom these presents shall come, send greeting.

"Whereas these United States, from a sincere desire of putting an end to the hostilities between his Most Christian Majesty and these United States on the one part, and his Britannic Majesty on the other, and of terminating the same, by a peace founded on such solid and equitable principles as reasonably to promise a permanency of the blessings of tranquillity, did heretofore appoint the Honorable John Adams, late a Commissioner of the United States of America at the Court of Versailles, late Delegate in Congress from the State of Massachusetts, and Chief Justice of the said State, their Minister Plenipotentiary, with full powers, general and special, to act in that quality, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the ambassadors or plenipotentiaries of his Most Christian Majesty and of his Britannic Majesty, and those of any other Princes or States whom it might concern, relating to the

re-establishment of peace and friendship; and whereas the flames of war have since that time been extended, and other nations and states are involved therein, now know ye that we, still continuing earnestly desirous, as far as depends upon us, to put a stop to the effusion of blood, and to convince the powers of Europe that we wish for nothing more ardently than to terminate the war by a safe and honorable peace, have thought proper to renew the powers formerly given to the said John Adams, and to join four other persons in commission with him, and having full confidence in the integrity, prudence, and ability of the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, our Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Versailles, and the Honorable John Jay, late President of Congress, and Chief Justice of the State of New York, and our Minister Plenipotentiary at the Court of Madrid, and the Honorable Henry Laurens, formerly President of Congress, and commissionated and sent as our agent to the United Provinces of the Low Countries, and the Honorable Thomas Jefferson, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, have nominated, constituted, and appointed, and by these presents do nominate, constitute, and appoint, the said Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson, in addition to the said John Adams, giving and granting to them the said John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, John Jay, Henry Laurens, and Thomas Jefferson, or the majority of them, or of such of them as may assemble, or in case of the death, absence, indisposition, or other impediment of the others, to any one of them, full power and authority, general and special, conjunctly and separately, and general and special command to repair to such place as may be fixed upon for opening negotiations for peace; and there, for us and in our name, to confer, treat, agree, and conclude with the ambassadors, commissioners, and plenipotentiaries of the Princes and States whom it may concern, vested with equal powers relating to the establishment of peace; and what-

soever shall be agreed and concluded for us, and in our name, to sign, and thereupon to make a treaty or treaties, and to transact every thing that may be necessary for completing, securing, and strengthening the great work of pacification, in as ample form and with the same effect as if we were personally present and acted therein, hereby promising in good faith that we will accept, ratify, fulfil, and execute whatever shall be agreed, concluded, and signed by our said ministers plenipotentiary, or a majority of them, or of such of them as may assemble, or in case of the death, absence, indisposition, or other impediment of the others, by any one of them, and that we will never act nor suffer any person to act contrary to the same, in whole or in any part. In witness whereof, we have caused these presents to be signed by our President, and sealed with his seal. Done at Philadelphia, the fifteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, and in the fifth year of our independence by the United States in Congress assembled.

"Samuel Huntington, and a seal.

"Attest: Charles Thomson, *Sec'y.*"

Another Commission given the same day is as follows: —

"The United States of America, to all to whom these presents shall come, greeting.

"Whereas his Most Christian Majesty, our great and beloved friend and ally, hath informed us by his minister plenipotentiary, whom he hath appointed to reside near us, that their Imperial Majesties, the Empress of Russia and the Emperor of Germany, actuated by sentiments of humanity, and a desire to put a stop to the calamities of war, have offered their mediation to the belligerent powers in order to promote peace. Now know ye that we, desirous, as far as depends upon us, to put a stop to the effusion of blood, and convince all the powers of Europe that we

wish for nothing more ardently than to terminate the war by a safe and honorable peace, relying on the justice of our cause, and persuaded of the wisdom and equity of their Imperial Majesties, who have so generously interposed their good offices for promoting so salutary a measure, have constituted and appointed, and by these presents do constitute and appoint, our trusty and well-beloved, the Honorable John Adams, late a Delegate in Congress from the State of Massachusetts, the Honorable Benjamin Franklin, our Minister at the Court of France, the Honorable John Jay, late President of Congress, and now our Minister at the Court of Madrid, the Honorable Henry Laurens, formerly President of Congress, and commissioned and sent *as our agent* to the United Provinces of the Netherlands, and the Honorable Thomas Jefferson, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, our ministers plenipotentiary, giving and granting to them, or such of them as shall assemble, or in case of the death, absence, indisposition, or other impediment of the others, to any one of them, full power and authority in our name, and on our behalf, in concurrence with his Most Christian Majesty, to accept in due form the mediation of their Imperial Majesties, the Empress of Russia, and the Emperor of Germany.

In testimony whereof, we have caused these presents to be signed by our President, and sealed with his seal.

Done at Philadelphia this fifteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-one, and in the fifth year of our independence, by the United States in Congress assembled.

"Samuel Huntington, *President*, and a seal.

"Attest: Charles Thomson, *Sec'y*."

This Commission, I think, is full proof that Mr. Laurens never had any other Commission or credential in Holland, except that of agent to negotiate a loan; because, when they were assembling his titles to do him honor in the

Commission for peace, they would not have suppressed a superior title, and inserted an inferior. This, however, was a circumstance of little consequence.

Soon after the peace of the 3d of September, 1783, I wrote to my friends in Congress, particularly to Mr. Gerry, that it was my wish to return to America; but, if Congress had any other services for me in Europe, they must send me my family, for I was determined at all events never to live another year in a state of separation from them. In 1784, Mr. Jefferson was a member of Congress; and now, after having twice refused, the world being at peace, and no British men-of-war to fear, Mr. Jefferson conceived a fancy to go to Europe. Accordingly, as Mr. Robert Morris informed me, he conceived a curious plan of negotiating treaties of commerce with all the world. Fifteen Commissions were accordingly issued to John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson, to treat with France, England, and every other European nation, and all the Barbary powers. Mr. Jefferson came over to France with these Commissions, with Colonel Humphreys as a secretary of legation to all of them; and I was summoned from Holland to Paris to attend there. At the same time, my dearly beloved heroine had embarked with her daughter and two servants, and arrived in England. In twenty-four hours, I arranged all my papers, took leave of the States-General and Prince of Orange, and set out for London, where I met my two angels, and immediately went on to Paris, where we resided together above a year before I was ordered to the Court of St. James's.

I have stated these minute circumstances, that you might have a distinct view of my residences in France. In 1778 and 1779, I was there about fifteen months, during all which time I was treated with invariable respect and esteem by the court and city and nation, as far as I saw it; and I have now by me original papers and

letters, expressing the esteem of the King, his ministers, and even the little subordinate agents of ministers, some of whom I had thwarted in their little peculating projects. From February, 1780, to July 1780, I was in Paris again. There I was invariably treated with esteem and respect, even by the Comte de Vergennes, notwithstanding a keen dispute, in which he had officiously involved me, respecting certain public questions, which is on record, and I am not afraid to submit to posterity, nor even to the party-poisoned present age.

I was only three weeks in France in 1781, on the affair of the mediation of the two imperial courts, and all that time I was treated with universal respect. I had no more to do in France till I met Mr. Franklin and Mr. Jefferson in our fifteen new Commissions. I resided at Auteuil, near Paris, little more than a year under these, during all which time all animosity between Mr. De Vergennes and me subsided. I attended the levee of the King and his minister, dined weekly with the latter with the other ambassadors, and was treated with as much civility as any of them. In 1785, I was ordered to England. Where, then, is the ridicule and hatred which Mrs. Warren has taken so much delight to record, either from her own imagination or from the information of some worthless tattler, I know not who?

I have been earnestly solicited, Madam, by gentlemen in various States, to write memoirs of my own life, — and for this reason, because no other person ever can write them. I am too old to hope for time to go through such a work, which must necessarily be very voluminous, however insignificant it may be. But, suppose I should undertake it, I must relate many things concerning your family. Suppose I should imitate your example, and say Colonel Otis, of Barnstable, was implicated by a large portion of his fellow-citizens in this, that, and the other thing, which I have often heard of him. Suppose I should say Mr. James

Otis, of Boston, was implicated in all that I have heard and read of him. Suppose I should say General James Warren was implicated in all that I have heard of him during and since the Revolutionary War. Suppose I should say of Mrs. Warren herself all that I have heard of her, and say she was implicated in them by a large portion of her fellow-citizens, male and female. Suppose I should write all this without inserting any refutation of any part of it, or suggesting any doubt of its truth. I will go no farther at present. I turn with disgust from the odious idea. But I ask you how such a work would affect your feelings? and what judgment you would form of it, if it were published in print in your own time?

Since your History has been public, I have been informed, by evidence which you cannot contest, that when sometimes I have had friends at your table who have drunk my health in a toast, General Warren, yourself, and the whole family, instead of accepting the toast, have all drunk the King of Great Britain. This, no doubt, was intended as an heroic avowal of your candid belief of my *corruption* in Great Britain!!!

Mrs. Warren, it is my opinion, and that of all others of any long experience that I have conversed with, that your History has been written to the taste of the nineteenth century, and accommodated to gratify the passions, prejudices, and feelings of the party who are now predominant. The characters are not such as you esteemed them in the times when they acted, but such as will please the present fashion. The great Thuanus appealed to God for the truth of his Histories: can Mrs. Warren imitate his example? History ought to be written in no other manner.

In a former letter, I hinted that I might attempt to conjecture the motives which had changed Mrs. Warren from a friend to a bitter enemy to me. I have much to say on this head of a personal nature. I know of nothing to say of a public nature.

But at present I will mention only an intrigue of a party complexion. I have been informed that, when Mr. Jefferson was Secretary of State, there was a meeting of the Anti-Federalists at Boston, who agreed to write to Mr. Jefferson, and engage him to reserve himself for a candidate for the next elections of President, and promised to support him in opposition to me and all others. I was accordingly to be run down and turned out. Since that time, the Warren family have countenanced some of the worst, if not all, the calumnies which have been circulated against me.

Mrs. Warren! the Scottish *Fratrum dulce Par*, Alexander Callender and Alexander Hamilton, might have printed libels against me till this day, and I might have let them all pass in silent contempt. But Mrs. Warren is a very different author, a native American of a family I respect, and a lady with whom as well as her husband I lived in friendship for many years, though for the last three-and-thirty years I have seldom seen them. I shall not suffer her errors to go down to posterity uncorrected.

I call Callender, Alexander, because I believe him to have been the very rascal who basely deserted his bail in Scotland, and fled from a halter to this country, where, to disguise himself, he assumed the names of his great patron, Stephens Thompson Mason.

If Mrs. Warren is determined to be enrolled in the glorious list of libellers of John Adams, she is welcome: Ned Church, Loyd, Freneau, Peter Markoe, Andrew Brown, Ben Beach, Duane, Porcupine, John Fenno Junior, McDonald and his satellites, Callender, Hamilton, Wood, Pasquin, and the nameless crew of the "Chronicle."

But most of these have already come to a bad end, and the rest will follow. I am, Madam, as far as I possibly can be, still your friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

No. 9.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, August 17, 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — In the 306th page of your first volume, there are certain facts that I had overlooked. "Richard Henry Lee, Esq., was the first who dared explicitly to propose a Declaration of Independence. The proposal spread a sudden dismay; a silent astonishment seemed to pervade the Assembly," &c. These expressions, Madam, could only have arisen from misinformation; or, perhaps, I shall express myself more properly by calling it a want of more accurate and particular information of the proceedings in Congress. The truth is, the subject had long been perfectly familiar to the contemplations of all the members of Congress.

The three great subjects, a Declaration of Independence, a Confederation of the States, and Treaties with Foreign Powers, had been held up by me to the view of Congress for more than a year before this motion was made by Mr. Lee, in concert with me. I had myself for more than a year scarcely suffered a day to pass without publicly adverting to these as measures of indispensable necessity, and earnestly urging Congress by various arguments to prepare themselves and the States and people to adopt them. It appeared to me that those gentlemen who still flattered themselves with hopes of reconciliation were extremely deficient in their knowledge of the haughty temper of the British government and nation, and of their sovereign contempt of us.

It was very well known that some of the members would never consent. For a whole year I had earnestly contended for the first step which appeared to be necessary, which was a recommendation to all the States to take the whole power of the nation into their own hands,

by instituting governments by the original authority of the people. It was not till the fifteenth day of May, 1776, that we carried the resolution. This measure also was concerted between Mr. Lee and myself, and supported by us, and carried after a long debate. Mr. Lee and myself were appointed to draw up the Resolution: it was drawn by my own hand, agreed to by Mr. Lee, and reported by me as Chairman of the Committee. If you will please to read that Resolution in the Journal of Congress, you will find that it amounted to a complete declaration of independence. What was it else? It was a complete dissolution of all allegiance to the King. It was considered in this light by those who opposed it. Mr. Duane called it "a machine to make independence." But, in fact, it was an assumption of independence itself. There could be, therefore, no astonishment in anybody when the motion was made by Mr. Lee. If there was any affectation of astonishment, it was only by those who determined to oppose it to the last, the greatest part of whom left us upon that occasion, some recalled by their constituents, and others went over to the enemy.

"The measure was advocated by John Adams." So it was, and so it had been for a year before, and so many arguments used, and so many counter-arguments used against it, that neither Mr. Adams nor Mr. Dickinson produced a single new idea or suggested a new thought.

Mr. Adams "invoked the God of Eloquence." It is amazing to me whence this ridiculous story could have originated. I think I have read it in some of the former historians, from whom probably you received it. But you may depend upon it, Madam, it is totally false. The Supreme Being, it is true, is the God of eloquence, and of every other good. But I never should have invoked Him under that title. I remember very well what I did say. But I will previously state a fact as it lies in my memory,

which may be somewhat explanatory of it. In the previous multiplied debates which we had upon the subject of independence, the delegates from New Jersey had voted against us. Their constituents were informed of it, and recalled them, and sent us a new set on purpose to vote for independence. Among these were Chief Justice Stockton and Dr. Witherspoon. In a morning when Congress met, we expected the question would be put and carried without any further debate, because we knew we had a majority, and thought that argument had been exhausted on both sides, as indeed it was, for nothing new was ever afterwards advanced on either side. But the Jersey delegates, appearing for the first time, desired that the question might be discussed. We observed to them that the question was so public, and had been so long discussed in pamphlets, newspapers, and at every fireside, that they could not be uninformed, and must have made up their minds. They said it was true they had not been inattentive to what had been passing abroad, but they had not heard the arguments in Congress, and did not incline to give their opinions until they should hear the sentiments of members there. Judge Stockton was most particularly importunate, till the members began to say, "Let the gentlemen be gratified;" and the eyes of the assembly were turned upon me, and several of them said, "Come, Mr. Adams, you have had the subject longer at heart than any of us, and you must recapitulate the arguments." I was somewhat confused at this personal application to me, and would have been very glad to be excused; but, as no other person arose, after some time I said, "This is the first time of my life when I seriously wished for the genius and eloquence of the celebrated orators of Athens and Rome, called in this unexpected and unprepared manner to exhibit all the arguments in favor of a measure the most important in my judgment that ever had been discussed in civil or political society. I had no art or oratory to

exhibit, and could produce nothing but simple reason and plain common sense. I felt myself oppressed by the weight of the subject, and I believed if Demosthenes or Cicero had ever been called to deliberate on so great a question, neither would have relied on his own talents without a supplication to Minerva, and a sacrifice to Mercury or the God of Eloquence."

All this, to be sure, was but a flourish, and not as I conceive a very bright exordium, but I felt awkwardly; but nothing that I said had the most remote resemblance to "an invocation of the God of Eloquence." I did not think it necessary in that assembly to make an ostentation of piety by a solemn prayer; but I believe I can safely say I had supplicated the Great Governor of the Universe in relation to the independence of my country as often and as devoutly as Mr. Dickinson had done.

Whether this crude idea was vented by any member of Congress from ill-will to me, or merely from misunderstanding or misrecollection, I know not. I wish some one had remembered the speech, for it is almost the only one I ever made that I wish was literally preserved.

The delegates from New Jersey declared themselves perfectly satisfied; and the question prevailed, notwithstanding Mr. Dickinson's superior "brilliancy of epithet."

And now, Madam, I will relate an anecdote. Some of these expressions of mine have got into a work of the Abbé Raynal; and I will tell you in what manner. The Abbé was very inquisitive with me after my speeches in Congress; said he had read some speeches in some of the publications in Europe, which were attributed to me, and he wished I would furnish him with any that I had published or delivered. I said, if he had seen any such speeches, they were forgeries; for I never had published nor written a speech in my life, made in any public assembly. Nor did I wish that any one I had ever deliv-

ered should be preserved in form, excepting one, and that was upon the question of independence. That had appeared to me the greatest question that ever was agitated, that the consequences of it would be felt over the whole globe; and, therefore, when I was called to discuss it, I owned I had wished for the "genius and eloquence of the celebrated orators of Athens and Rome." But that I had made no minutes of what I said, and no part of it had been published. I thought no more of the conversation till the Abbé's pamphlet came out, and there I read, "*que n'ai-je reçu le génie et l'éloquence des célèbres orateurs d'Athènes et de Rome*," &c.; and these are all the true words of my speech that ever appeared in print. I have mentioned this because even this passage of Raynal has been belied in America to my disadvantage.

I am, Madam, as usual,

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN.

No. 10.

JOHN ADAMS TO MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, August 19, 1807.

"Pride of talents and much ambition were, undoubtedly, combined in the character of the President who immediately succeeded General Washington;" and these are represented as the most prominent features of his character. Vol. III. p. 393.

Permit me, Madam, to ask the favor of you to point out the act or word which appeared to you to evince this pride of talents. I know not that I ever felt any such pride. A man whose disposition is so open as mine, and who has indulged himself in so much facetiousness and so much irony among his friends as you know I always have done, may have often mistaken for his friends enemies of the blackest rancor of heart, who may have misrepresented him

in a thousand instances. But pride of talents has been very far from my heart. I never in my life believed that I had any talents beyond mediocrity. I have always been sensible, to my mortification, that all I have done has been accomplished by the severest and most incessant labor. I have no reason to be proud of any thing. If I could be proud of any thing, it would be industry; but even in this I am much more inclined to be ashamed that I have done no more than to be proud of what I have done. I mean not by this any affectation of modesty, for I will open my whole soul to you on this subject. I have great satisfaction in believing that I have done more labor, run through more and greater dangers, and made greater sacrifices than any man among my contemporaries, living or dead, in the service of my country; and I should not hesitate to hazard all reputation, if I did not convince the public of it too, if I should ever undertake it.

This I deliver to you as my cool, sober, deliberate opinion, and am not afraid it should go down to posterity as such. Will you please to name the man who has done, suffered, and sacrificed so much? Name him, and I will make a sketch of a comparison, and either convince you or expose myself, perhaps both. You may call this pride or vanity or self-sufficiency or vain-glory, or what you please. But it is the truth.

One event in my administration I might expect would be represented by Hamilton and his faction as the effect of pride of talents; but I ought not to have expected it from Mrs. Warren or any of her party. I mean *the peace with France*. In this measure, I was opposed by all the five of my own cabinet council, as they call it; and by all the leading members as they were called of the Senate, and by all the like members of the House of Representatives, — I mean of the Federal party. I was reduced in my own judgment to the alternative of involving my country in a foreign war abroad and a civil war at home on one

side, or taking upon myself, against the advice and wishes of all about me, the renewal of negotiations with France, after France had humbled herself in her own eyes, and in the sight of all Europe and America. This I did, believing at the time that I was signing my own death-warrant as a public man; for I knew that the Anti-Federalists had been wrought up by twelve years of incessant calumny to such a rage of prejudice and antipathy to me that this measure would not procure me a single vote from that party, and I had demonstration enough that the same measure would exasperate so many of the Federalists that the next election would undoubtedly be turned against me. I was very far from being proud of this situation. But I thought my duty to my country ought to prevail over every personal and party consideration, and that I ought to follow my own judgment formed upon mature and very serious deliberation, let it differ from whom it would.

I did follow it, and gave you that peace which has been the source of all the triumphs of your party. I think you ought to give me credit for it, instead of charging me with pride. But it shall be just as you please, Mrs. Warren, but I have never sacrificed a principle, nor even concealed an opinion, from a motive of ambition or an affectation of popularity. We come now to the "much ambition." I am not about to unman myself. If I should represent myself more than man, no person would believe me; and, if I pretended to be less, I hope I should find no credit. Ambition is wrought into the soul of every human being from Alexander and Napoleon down to the infant in his mother's arms. I must be a monster, then, in my own estimation, if I had been destitute of it in any part of my life. Ambition, too, is the most lively in the most intelligent and the most generous minds. I am far, therefore, from being offended at being represented as ambitious. There can be no rational question about the existence of ambition in

any human breast: it is scarcely extinct in idiots and lunatics.

The only questions should be, to what objects is it directed, and by what laws is it governed. If the object be the good of our friends, neighbors, country, and mankind, this is surely not censurable. If it is regulated by truth, honor, justice, and benevolence, it is certainly laudable. Now, Madam, I beseech you to tell me when, where, and in what transaction of my administration, or indeed of my whole life, my ambition prompted me to any other object, or was not regulated by those moral sentiments and rules.

What projects inconsistent with the strictest purity did my ambition ever suggest, instigate, or pursue? Whilst I hope for your candid answer to these questions, I will say if any man, living or dead, could produce incontestable proofs of a sense of duty prevailing over the most seducing temptations of ambition, I am bold to say I have it in my power to produce a great many of them. On the contrary, I challenge all my enemies to produce an instance in which my ambition aimed at improper objects, or pursued good ones by unjustifiable means. I have never adopted the maxim that the end would sanctify or justify the means.

> "Careat successibus opto,
> Quisquis ab eventu facta notanda putat."

It is with the utmost astonishment that I read from Mrs. Warren's pen such abominable sentiments as those in the next page, that I "drew a doleful picture of the confusion and dissolution of all republics." I drew no pictures but those of faithful history. Not a fact has ever been contested, nor ever can be. My pictures of the confusions and dissolutions were of republics ill constituted, improperly mixed, or not mixed at all; and this with the single view of convincing my countrymen of the necessity and duty

of constituting their republics with such balances as would protect them from tyranny in every form, and this in opposition to Shays's Rebellion, to the disorganizing votes of county committees and conventions, and especially to the weak, vain projects of my particular friends, Rochefoucauld and Condorcet, who I saw were about setting the universe in a blazing bon-fire, by their presumptuous ignorance and shallow jurisprudence, a sovereignty in a single representative assembly in France. "My Defence of the Constitutions had a powerful tendency to shake the republican system through the United States." This is so far from being true, that those books contributed more than all the military exertions to quell the insurrections in Massachusetts, to convince the people who had been guilty of them of their error, and to establish the Constitution of Massachusetts, and introduce it as a model into the National Constitution.

You pay a miserable compliment to the information and judgment of the people, Mrs. Warren, and a worse compliment to the republican system, when you suppose that the truth can deceive the former, or shake the latter.

Republics well constituted have been the best governments in the world, but republics ill-constituted have been the worst. "Few had the hardiness to counteract a republican form of government until several years after the United States had become an independent nation." Who were these few? I know of none who ever counteracted a republican government. If there has been any party or any individual who has counteracted such a government, I know nothing of it.

Such abominable misrepresentations, such political chimeras, may have answered the purposes of a party, but, as far as I know, they are a merciless injustice.

If even a Hamilton, or any of his admirers, ever counteracted such a government, I never knew it; and certainly, at this time of day, if I knew it, I would not

conceal it. Nay, farther, there has been no time, not even when he was most obsequious to me, when I would not have revealed it, if I had known it. The Quakers are the only people who avow themselves monarchists, and the Quakers are Jeffersonians.

The grave reflections in page 394 and 395 would make a figure in the "Aurora" or the "Chronicle," and would be very proper for one of the sitters, or runners, or riders, at our elections, to read in the bar-room of one of our inns to a cluster of tavern-haunters, but are altogether unworthy of the pen of Mrs. Warren, utterly repugnant to the character of History.

One word more of my "much ambition." If by "ambition" you mean a love of power or a desire of public offices, I answer, I never solicited a vote in my life for any public office. I never swerved from any principle, I never professed any opinion, I never concealed even any speculative opinion, to obtain a vote. I never sacrificed a friend or betrayed a trust. I never hired scribblers to defame my rivals. I never wrote a line of slander against my bitterest enemy, nor encouraged it in any other. Look over the list of your present party friends, and see if you can find one who can say as much. From 1768, when I removed my family to Boston, I never attended a popular assembly till I was chosen their representative, in the place of Mr. Bowdoin and your brother, in 1770, and then only for a moment, to accept the choice. I never attended another popular assembly till 1774, when in a Boston town-meeting, of which I was made moderator, I received the news of the appointment of members of Congress, and that I was one. The unbiassed judgment and spontaneous feelings of the people have conferred upon me all the offices and trusts I ever held. When I was finally turned out of the highest office in the nation by the arts of a Burr and a Hamilton, and by innumerable other arts which you probably know better than I do, have I com-

plained? Have I been dejected? Have I been enraged? Ask those who know me. Ambition disappointed naturally turns into revenge. It produces rage, violence, envy, malice, hatred, and perpetual projects to recover the lost consideration. Have you heard of any such effects upon me? If you have, you have heard most impudent lies. On the contrary, although I have met with private misfortunes and family afflictions since my exile to my "*terres*," as severe as any you have ever experienced, I can sincerely declare that the last seven years have been the happiest of my life. Have I uttered one complaint? Have I taken one step to regain the popular favor? Have I done one act of revenge upon any of my enemies? Have I ever done any thing in opposition to Mr. Jefferson's government? I could have made a great deal of noise, Mrs. Warren. If these are characteristics of any illaudable ambition, I am ignorant of the nature of the passion as well as of the meaning of the word, and most humbly entreat your ladyship to explain them both to me. I will not retort, Mrs. Warren, at present, upon you or your connections, though you must be sensible that in the opinion of the world, or at least in the prejudices of the people, I might find an ample field for retaliation.

In a former letter, I hinted at some personal motives that might have contributed to change Mrs. Warren from a zealous friend into an enemy to me. I can conjecture but one source of this memorable turn of the tide. It is this. At the commencement of the new government, Mrs. Warren, by some of her letters to me, seemed to suppose it was in my power to obtain some promotion for some of her family. She might think that I did not exert myself enough for this purpose. To this accusation, if it is one, I answer: By the Constitution, the Vice-President was confined to the legislature, at the head of the Senate, and had not the smallest connection with the executive author-

ity. I soon found that all the Secretaries of State were jealous enough of my interference in any of their departments. As I had no authority, I thought I ought not to aim at any influence in nominations to offices. When Washington thought fit to consult me concerning the qualifications or merits of any of the candidates, I gave him all the information I possessed, with candor and integrity; but I scarcely recollect an instance of my recommending a person for nomination, without the express application of the President to me. Had I been President and at liberty to act my own judgment, I should have nominated General Warren to the office of Collector for the port of Plymouth; for at that time all the obloquy I had heard, and all the extreme unpopularity into which he had fallen, had not shaken my opinion of his integrity.

His merits and capacity in the Revolution were known to no man better than to me. But the conduct of General Warren at the time of Shays's Rebellion, whether truly or falsely represented, and his supposed decided and inveterate hostility to the Federal Constitution, had produced so determined a spirit against him, that if Washington himself had nominated him to any office he would surely have been negatived by the Senate. Nor was there one moment during my administration when he would not have been negatived by two-thirds of the Senate. For in my time the Federalists had a great majority in Senate, which they never had in Washington's day. This their strength made them presumptuous, and proved their ruin, but it was an immovable bar to any nomination of Warren in my short period. I am not chargeable, then, with any neglect of the duties of friendship or of any oblivion of the merits of General Warren while I was in public. But I am apprehensive that the family thought I was opposed to them, or forgot them, and consequently turned their devotions to a planet that they thought a rising sun,

became very willing to believe as many of the popular lies against me as they possibly could, to call me a monarchist, and encourage the insinuations that I had been corrupted in England, &c., and to cry up Jefferson as the great republican, — Jefferson, who is not half so much of a republican as I am, and whose administration has not been so conformable to republican principles or manners as mine was. This is imputing your change, Madam, to private views and selfish and family motives, to be sure; but I cannot help it. I can think of no others. If you can explain it upon better principles, I shall be very happy.

The only two offices General Warren ever held under the old Congress, that of paymaster of the army and that of member of the navy board, I procured for him; and General Warren has repeatedly acknowledged it to me, I believe, in your hearing. General Warren must remember that Mr. Cushing and Mr. Hancock were not very cordial friends of his, and, if he is ignorant, I know that Mr. Samuel Adams was not very zealous till I compelled him to be so. The motives of these gentlemen may be conjectured. I wish I had not been compelled to expose the imperfections of so many patriots. But, if more justice is not done me than is done in your History, I shall be obliged, in self-defence, to lay open many more.

Mrs. Warren, in my numerous journeys from France to Holland, and from Holland to France, I took a great delight in contemplating at Antwerp the great and beautiful productions of art which are collected in that city, by Rubens, Rembrandt, Vandyke, and many other great painters of the Flemish School. Among these was one which I never failed to view with wonder, because it represented human nature so truly, and so exactly according to the experience of my whole life, though in the most perfect and sacred of human characters. The painting represented Jesus in the midst of his twelve apostles, lean-

ing familiarly on the shoulder of the beloved disciple, and distinguishing him from all the eleven by some peculiar marks of attention and kindness. The eyes of all are turned upon this tender scene, and jealousy is painted on every countenance, more marked, however, in some than in others: but Peter is almost transported with rage; his eyes look as if they would start out of their sockets; his lips seem to quiver, and his teeth grin to such a degree that you are apt to fancy you hear them grit against each other.

I might mention many of our best men in whom I have observed these passions, but at present I shall name but few. Mr. Hancock was a saint, Mr. Cushing was a saint, and Mr. Samuel Adams was a saint. I will not say which of them resembled Peter the most. But I will say that the last of them resembled Saint Peter more than the beloved John. These gentlemen all considered General Warren as a person who might be brought forward as a candidate for Governor or Lieutenant-governor. I have no more to say at present.

I may have passed over some passages in your History, Madam, which relate to me. But I believe I have observed them all. This letter, therefore, will be the last upon this subject. I have received none of your favors since I began to write. Had I read your History without knowing the author, I should have written under that part of it which relates to me a stanza from Pope's Alley, in imitation of Spenser, and taken no more notice of it: —

> "Hard by a sty, beneath a roof of thatch,
> Dwelt Obloquy, who, in her early days,
> Baskets of fish at Billingsgate did watch, —
> Cod, whiting, oyster, mackrel, sprat, or plaice.
> There learned she speech from tongues that never cease:
> Slander, beside her, like a magpie chatters
> With Envy, (spitting cat,) dread foe to peace.
> Like a curs'd cur, Malice before her clatters,
> And, vexing ev'ry wight, tears clothes and all to tatters."

But Mrs. Warren's egregious errors must be corrected, though I cannot, and will not, apply these lines to her.

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN.

No. 6.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, Mass., August 27, 1807.

JOHN ADAMS, ESQUIRE.

At a time of life when retirement is sought for, and the release from all political attentions desired, ten long letters of accusation and reproach, of interrogation and retrospection, within the term of a few weeks, may be designed, not only to distress, but to create passions in my bosom which were never felt nor indulged.

When I finished mine of August 15th, I thought I might calculate on a respite from your exertions to insult and affront a woman of my age and standing in society. But her character may yet resist the malevolence of your pen, however indecently it has or may have been wielded, in hopes that the celebrity of your own fame might sanction an effort, as you threaten, "to enroll her name with a list of liars and libellers."

It is impossible to pass over in silence your tenth letter, though you say it is your last. This letter, combined with many passages in the preceding one, is the top stone of insolent composition. It is wound up with the most finished abuse and affrontive language that your genius or reading could furnish. To this you have subjoined a curious selection of poetry from Pope's Alley. But it was a miserable subterfuge, to cover your own malignancy, to crowd in an interlineation with different ink, and at a different time, that "*you cannot nor will not apply these lines to Mrs. Warren.*" You might perhaps never have been prompted to such allusions, had not your previous efforts to wound

the feelings of your former friend have hardened your own so far as to lead you to cry out with Macbeth, —

> "I am in blood
> Stept in so far, that, should I wade no more,
> Returning were as tedious as go o'er."

After all, what has been the crime of the author of a History in which you have been named with so much respect? The historian never charged you with a single immorality, though her impartiality has led her, however highly she may have estimated your talents and your meritorious services to your country, conscientiously to assert that you, like all other human beings, was subject to change.

This truth I have witnessed from my first acquaintance with you: your nerves have not always been wound up by the same key. I have seen you at some times ready to despair of the Commonwealth, at others have heard you assert jocosely that *liberty-pole government was the best government in the world.* At one time, I have heard you talk enthusiastically on the "divine science of politics" and the systems productive of the greatest good to mankind; at another, I have heard you assert that *self-love was the sole principle of human action.*

You may probably remember that this kind of conversation once at the Plymouth fireside, with some allusions to the doctrine of fatalism, produced a little poem addressed to yourself, which you may peruse again in page 195 of Mrs. Warren's volume of miscellaneous poems. You have done many important services for your country since those days, but you have doubtless changed your opinions of men and things very many times: those changes, when marked or mentioned by Mrs. Warren, have always been attributed to the best motives, with a candid apology for the imperfection of human intellect, and the mistakes of an old friend.

How unlike are your charges! Mrs. Warren is accused of a total defalcation from all principle, actuated by a malignant heart, uttering falsehoods without number, and *joining an infamous band of worthless defamers in slandering Mr. Adams, in order to bring forward Mr. Jefferson to the Presidential Chair;* and in writing for, and lost in the idolatrous worship of, such as you have considered the atheistical and licentious partisans of republicanism.

These, sir, are some of the charges against Mrs. Warren, through a correspondence in which not only the principles and manners of a gentleman, but even the language of one, have been abandoned.

To satiate your thirst for revenge for imaginary crimes, for sins of omission and commission, for omitting to draw an *immaculate* character, and for suggesting that Mr. Adams could have been once mistaken, Mrs. Warren's family and her connections are implicated as accessory in the *guilt* of the historian. And what is the imputed guilt? The temerity of telling the truth: that in a certain portion of his time Mr. Adams was in favor of a monarchic government, and that this was generally believed through the United States, who rejected his opinions.

Then, insinuations are interwoven through all your letters against the whole Warren family as having opposed or criminated you. These charges are contemptible enough; but more contemptible still is your effort to magnify the *ingratitude* of the family, by saying that there once was a time, when, had you been the Chief Magistrate, you *would have nominated General Warren a collector for the little port of Plymouth.*

Look back, sir, on what you was, look back also on Mr. Warren, say forty years ago, and recollect what would then have been your reflections, had you have been told that you would some day have been raised to such a pinnacle of honor as to have it in your power to insult Mr. Warren by the offer of such a petty appointment. A

short retrospection may also bring to your mind that you are perhaps not so much indebted to any other man in the United States for putting you in the road to the various dignified stations to which you have since been lifted; and, when his influence had brought you forward as a member of the first Continental Congress, you may also remember that you took no step of importance without first consulting him. This may be evinced by the many letters now in my hands, as well as by your own copies.

I will remind you of this by copying a few extracts which confirm this assertion. In a letter to Mr. Warren, dated Ipswich, June 25, 1774, you speak of the Congress that was to be convened at Philadelphia, thus: "I view the assembly that is to be there as I do the Court of Areopagus, the Council of the Amphictyons, a Conclave, a Sanhedrim, a Divan, I know not what. I suppose you sent me there to school. I thank you for thinking me an apt scholar, or capable of learning. For my part, I am at a loss, totally at a loss, what to do when I get there. I must entreat the favor of your sentiments, and Mrs. Warren's, what is proper, practicable, expedient, wise, just, good, necessary, to be done at Philadelphia. Pray, let me have them in a letter before I go."

I have just counted twenty-five letters received from you in those days of your pupilage, dated Philadelphia, October, 1775, and directed to Mr. Warren, besides a number to myself. November 5th, 1775, you go on: "I am under great obligations to you for your attention to me. I am obliged to trouble you with inquiries concerning subjects which you understand very well, and I know nothing of." In a previous letter, you have observed thus: "Every line I receive from you gives me great pleasure, and is of vast use to me in the public cause. Your letters were very useful to me last fall. Your character became then known, and much esteemed. The few letters I have received from you this time have increased

the desire of more ; and some other gentlemen who happened to know you, particularly Governors Hopkins and Ward, of Rhode Island, have confirmed very good opinions which had been formed. I must entreat you to omit no opportunity of writing, and to be as particular as possible." — "Every letter of yours is worth its weight in gold."

And is it possible that you could ever suppose that this friend to whom you once looked up with so much veneration could, in a subsequent period, ever think himself obliged, promoted, or dignified, by *your* appointing him a collector for the little port of Plymouth ?

You have several times hinted at personalities, and expressed your suspicion that private resentment had been harbored by the "Warren family" for something that seems to lie upon your conscience.

I know not what you can mean, unless you refer to a circumstance that I never thought of much consequence. Thus, you have upbraided me in your last with asking your influence, in the newly organized government of the United States, for *promotion* to my family. I deny it, sir. I once had a son, — a son whose amiability and worth you have frequently acknowledged under your own hand. This son had resided long in Europe, was well acquainted with the history of foreign nations, with foreign languages, and with commercial affairs : he would have liked a longer residence abroad, had he been appointed consul at Lisbon, as he had reason to expect from the influence of several of the first members of Congress.

It is true I once mentioned this circumstance to you, presuming you would readily facilitate this little favor, which was not beyond the influence of the Vice-President of the United States, the long professed friend of a gentleman whose services and merits you very well knew deserved much higher marks of consideration, both from his country and its government, than such an appointment

for a son. A rough, ungentlemanly reply to that letter was a sufficient bar to any subsequent application for *your patronage*. But a circumstance of so little importance to them has never instigated the "Warren family" to form a junction with Burr, Hamilton, or any others in your list of enemies, as you have insinuated, "to turn you out of the highest office in the nation."

The allegations scattered through your letters, that Mrs. Warren was acquainted with the arts and intrigues of your enemies, or that she knew any thing of a long list of persons, whom you have denounced as infamous, and observed that "most of them have already come to a bad end, and the rest will follow," are too much despised by her to attempt a refutation of your errors.

Are not these things a strong proof that a man may be "set in opposition to himself," that the same man who has at one time requested her husband thus, — "Remember me, sir, in the most respectful manner to your good lady, whose manners, virtues, genius, and spirit will render her immortal, notwithstanding the general depravity," — at a subsequent period the same lady is insulted and vilified in the grossest manner in a series of letters from Mr. Adams to Mrs. Warren? Thus much for personalities. I know of nothing else on which you could found your numerous insinuations that personal resentment towards you had ever actuated my pen. If you scrutinize your own heart, you may perhaps be the best judge whether your own conduct has not merited every censure you complain of.

You say in one of your letters that you have been "urged to write the memoirs of your own life, because nobody else could do it." If you should commence your own biography, a work which you say "must necessarily be very voluminous," — which, undoubtedly, it must be, if you mean to include therein every trivial suggestion that may have come to your ear relative to friends or foes, —

there may be allegations brought forward which were never before heard or thought of by them. I am led to expect this, not only from your threats, but from the little captious, unmeaning insinuations in the string of suppositions which here follow: "Suppose I should say your father Colonel Otis, of Barnstable, was implicated," &c. For what, sir? Colonel Otis's character was so pure that malice itself could not injure it. "Suppose I should say Mr. James Otis, of Boston, was implicated," &c. You know and the world knows his abilities and his merits too well to dare to say any thing to injure his memory. "Suppose I should say General James Warren was implicated in all that I have heard of him during and since the Revolutionary War?" Supposing you should, sir, — if you say nothing but truth, his integrity, his patriotism, and other virtues cannot be depreciated by the pen of envy or slander. "Suppose I should say of Mrs. Warren that she has been implicated by a portion of her fellow-citizens, male and female?" She is not afraid to stand before the tribunal of any of her fellow-citizens, either "male or female," who may be disposed to examine her conduct through a long page of life, in which she has endeavored to discharge her domestic as well as all other duties with fidelity and kindness.

For what, then, is she implicated? You bring no specific charge against her, but in the next page you say you will mention "an intrigue of a party complexion," and that you "have been informed that when Mr. Jefferson was Secretary of State there was a meeting of the Anti-Federalists at Boston, who agreed to write to Mr. Jefferson and engage him to reserve himself as a candidate for the next election of President, and promised to support him in opposition [to me and] to all others. I was accordingly to be run down and turned out." Is Mrs. Warren to be implicated for this intrigue? Is it possible that Mr. Adams could for a moment indulge the absurd opinion that Mrs. Warren

knew any thing of an intrigue of which she never heard until informed by him? You have observed that "since that time the Warren family have countenanced some of the worst, if not all the calumnies which have been circulated against me." This is a bold and unfounded assertion. The *Warren family* at the period to which you allude were too deeply immersed in domestic affliction of the most poignant nature to pay much attention to the party contests of candidates for office. Mrs. Warren's bosom was then lacerated by wounds which no time can heal, nor can oblivion ever be drawn over the cruelties which occasioned so much parental grief. Nor have the *Warren family* ever injured you or yours, but their mother has been very attentive and affectionate to your children: This they know, and to this my beloved friend Mrs. Adams will attest.

But however vindictive you may feel towards Mrs. Warren, or however ardently you may wish to implicate her character, you can make no exertions more injurious than those contained in your late letters. To them you may recur; there you will find the darkest passions of the soul are in some measure gratified; and if you wish, as you seem to hint, to enroll her name on the list of a group of characters whom you most detest, it is at your option. It is true she has some general knowledge of several of the most prominent characters you have named as your enemies, but she knows not either the modes of life or the manner of death of but few of the characters that complete your long list of culprits; nor does she tremble at the most terrible denunciations of your pen.

I shall, therefore, now close after a question or two, and some subsequent observations which naturally arise. You have observed in your letter of August 15th, thus: "It is my opinion, and that of all others of any long experience that I have conversed with, that your History has been written to the taste of the nineteenth century, and accom-

modated to gratify the passions, prejudices, and feelings of the party who are now predominant. The characters are not such as you once esteemed them in the times when they acted, but such as will please the present fashion."

Pray, sir, who are the wise and experienced characters whose sagacity has discovered that Mrs. Warren's History was written to the taste of the nineteenth century, and was accommodated to gratify the passions, prejudices, and feelings of the party predominant? Do they not belong to that description of persons you once so emphatically denominated "summer flies, blood-suckers," &c.? If you have forgotten the conversation to which I allude, I will remind you when it took place, and with whom. It was with a particular and very dear friend of mine, a few weeks before it was ascertained that you had been elected Vice-President of the United States. Your mind was then in a perturbed state, or you would not have made use of very many expressions which were penned down, and transmitted to me within a few days after the conversation. Shall I refresh your memory with a small part of this *curious* conversation? You spoke of Mr. King with a great deal of passion, and pronounced a philippic against him, in which were these expressions: "If such men as King had been in government ten years ago, we should now be trampled, — stamping hard with your foot, — under the feet of the British lion." This might be true enough. You went on, in answer to an observation of the gentleman, that "Mr. King was popular in some parts of the State:" "Don't tell me of his popularity, sir! It originated in deception. He obtained it by opposing the continental impost; and now he comes forward the most strenuous supporter of it. . . . Such summer flies, such blood-suckers, it would take fifty such men as King to make a Josiah Quincy, and five hundred of him to make a James Otis. I never saw any thing original from him yet. What is it has given him this repu-

tation? and who is it that is puffing him in all the papers? Who are your Sedgwicks and your Kings?" . . .

"Mr. King and Mr. Sedgwick are disappointed in the election for Senators, are they not, Mr. —— ?"

"Mr. Sedgwick to be Speaker of the House of Representatives and member of Congress for this State is quite too much for him. What, in God's name, gave him a right to become a Senator for this State?"

It is not difficult to prove that Mr. Adams himself has often changed his opinion of men and measures. An instance or two is sufficient to evince this truth. About the time his own son was appointed to reside as a public minister in the Batavian Provinces, Mr. Adams asserted that this same Mr. King, this "summer fly," this "bloodsucker," should be promoted to the rank of Ambassador from the United States of America to the Court of Great Britain. Thus, it is clear that he has not always estimated characters just as they were in the times when they acted, but such as would please the present fashion.

I will only add one instance more to the same point. Compare a letter from Mr. Adams to Mr. Warren, dated Paris, April 13, 1783, with an extract of a letter of his to the same gentleman, dated July, 1775, in the last of which Mr. Adams says: "Franklin's character you know, — his masterly acquaintance with the French language; his extensive correspondence in France; his great experience in life; his wisdom, prudence, caution; his engaging address, united to his unshaken firmness in the present American system of politics and war,— point him out as the fittest character for this momentous undertaking.[1] Nothing more need be said: there is no abler or better American that I know of." Again: "I assure you, the old gentleman is as firm as a mountain, and very serviceable to us. His

[1] To go into Canada.

head is clear, and his heart strong. I wish the multiplicity of business at his age may not deprive his country of his services too soon."

When you compare the two letters above alluded to, in the first of which, dated April 13, 1783, no language is too severe in which to draw the character of Dr. Franklin, you may perhaps justify a change of opinion relative to the characters of men, when time has developed alterations which sanction a different portrait of them, without a conformity to present fashions or modes of thinking.

You have informed me that some of your friends have observed to you that my History was calculated for the taste of the nineteenth century. Whatever deference might have been due to the judgment of some of them before their hearts were perverted by party rancor, you may be assured I have now very little consideration for their opinions. I have had reason to suppose for several months that there has been a combination to sink into oblivion or to destroy the validity of a late History of the Revolution; but until recently I did not suspect that Mr. Adams had any hand in the authorcide.

The History has gone forth to the world, with my settled and fixed determination to disregard its censure or applause. Mr. Adams's opinions might have defeated this determination, had they not have been so marked with passion, absurdity, and inconsistency as to appear more like the ravings of a maniac than the cool *critique* of genius and science. Criticism, in order to be useful, should always be decent, as has been said by some of my "*French friends*."

You know, sir, that the History under consideration was written before the commencement of the nineteenth century, and even before Mr. Adams was President of the United States. Did you not often urge Mrs. Warren to "continue her annals," and add, as a reason for urging

this, that "no one had more authentic materials, and that you knew of no one that would do it better." This opinion might have induced you to write thus to Mrs. Warren: "Hague, Aug. 19, 1782. I hope Mrs. Warren will give my Dutch negotiation a place in her History: it is one of the most extraordinary in all the diplomatic records. But it has succeeded to a marvel."

There is a meanness as well as malignancy in striving to blast a work that many of the best judges of literary merit that even yourself have been acquainted with in America have spoken of in a manner very flattering to the author. Nor has your correspondent ever been charged with a want of veracity until you have unkindly done this; and no part of her deportment through a long life has ever been suspected to spring from malignancy of heart.

If there is not sufficient merit in the History of the American Revolution to establish its reputation, the author ought not to endeavor to impose it on society. If there is, it will not be in the power of enmity to sink it into oblivion. If I should live to see another edition called for of the work you have been vilifying, and should be fully convinced of any mistake, I feel myself ready to correct any error that may inadvertently have crept in, but am persuaded I shall never be obliged to contradict myself.

I have heretofore been fond of perusing your opinions on any work or any subject. This has never been done with feelings so deficient in the benign and heavenly spirit of friendship as I think have appeared in the letters recently received from the late President of the United States. I think I shall ever be a stranger to those intemperate passions that have guided his pen.

I now forbear further remarks. The lines with which you concluded your late correspondence cap the climax of rancor, indecency, and vulgarism. Yet, as an old friend,

I pity you; as a Christian, I forgive you; but there must be some acknowledgment of your injurious treatment or some advances to conciliation, to which my mind is ever open, before I can again feel that respect and affection towards Mr. Adams which once existed in the bosom of

MERCY WARREN.

APPENDIX

TO

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN JOHN ADAMS AND MERCY WARREN.

MRS. ABIGAIL ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, March 9, 1807.

MY DEAR MRS. WARREN, — To your kind and friendly letter[1] I fully designed an immediate reply, but a severe attack of rheumatic complaint in my head has confined me to my chamber for several weeks, and rendered me unable to hold a pen. Though recovering from it, my head still feels cracked, — shattered I am sure it is. You will therefore pardon any inaccuracy I may commit. My health, which you so kindly inquire after, has been better for two years past than for many of those which preceded them. I am frequently reminded that I here have no abiding place. I bend to the blast. It passes over for the present, and I rise again.

Your letter, my dear Madam, — written so much in the style of Mrs. Warren's ancient friendship, — renewed all those sensations which formerly gave me pleasure and from which I have derived sincere and durable gratification; and I anticipate a still closer and more cordial union in the world of spirits, to which we are hastening, when these earthly tabernacles shall be mouldered into dust.

If we were to count our years by the revolutions we have witnessed, we might number them with the ante-diluvians. So rapid have been the changes, that the mind, though fleet in

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[1] This letter has not been found among the papers left by Mrs. Adams Those which follow relate to the discussion already held, and to the reconciliation. The remainder are inserted as interesting in themselves historically, as well as showing the ultimate restoration of entire good feeling between the parties. — EDS.

its progress, has been outstripped by them; and we are left, like statues, gazing at what we can neither fathom nor comprehend.

You inquire, What does Mr. Adams think of Napoleon? If you had asked Mrs. Adams, she would have replied to you in the words of Pope: —

> "If plagues and earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
> Why then a Borgia or a Napoline?"

I am authorized to reply to your question, "What does Mr. Adams think Napoleon was made for?" My answer shall be as prompt and frank as her question, — Napoleon's Maker alone can tell all he was made for. In general, Napoleon was, I will not say made, but permitted, for a cat-o'-nine-tails to inflict ten thousand lashes upon the back of Europe, as divine vengeance for the atheism, infidelity, fornications, adulteries, incests, and sodomies, as well as briberies, robberies, murders, thefts, intrigues, and fraudulent speculations, of her inhabitants; and, if we are far enough advanced in the career, — and certainly we have progressed very rapidly, — to whip us for the same crimes; and, after he has answered the end he was made or permitted for, to be thrown into the fire. Now I think I have merited the answer from Mrs. Warren which she has promised me to the question, "What was Napoleon made for?"

May I ask Mrs. Warren, in my turn, What was Colonel Burr made for? And what can you make of him or his projects, enveloped in as many mysteries as Mrs. Radcliffe's Castle of Udolpho? How he mounted to power we know, and a faithful historic page ought to record; and, after he had answered the end for which he was permitted, we know how he fell. What is yet left for him to perform, time must unveil.

I thank you, my dear Madam, for your inquiries after my daughter. She was well a few days since. She had letters from her son dated in November. He was then at Trinidad, where he expected to pass the winter; a Don Quixote expedition, which could never have met with his grandfather's or my assent or consent, if it had been known to us before he had sailed. It has been a source of much anxiety to us and to his mother.

. . . . . .

I pray you to present Mr. Adams's and my regards to General Warren. We both of us rejoice to hear that he enjoys so much

health at his advanced period of life. We shall always be happy to hear of the welfare of friends whom we have loved from our early years, and with whom we have passed many, very many, social hours of pleasing converse, in unity of bond and spirit.

With sincere regard, I subscribe your friend,

ABIGAIL ADAMS.

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

CAMBRIDGE, 15th Sept., 1807.

MY DEAR MADAM, — Since the receipt of your favor of the 25th of August, I have been severely attacked by the influenza, which for ten days so prostrated me as to render me incapable of attention of any kind; but it is now abating, and I hope will depart never to return again.

The subject of your letter of yesterday has astonished me. I cannot judge of it without seeing the letters, but am clearly of opinion that "very angry, vindictive, and indecent phraseology" admits of but one dignified line of conduct on the part of a lady, and that is *silence*. This giving an opportunity to the offended party to cool and reflect, often, of itself, cures the evil, which volumes of recrimination or justification would but serve to increase. I will soon communicate to you my sentiments on that part of your History which relates to this matter, and request in the interim that you will accept, with General Warren and your family, the best wishes of Mrs. Gerry, myself, and family for your health and happiness, and be assured that I am ever very respectfully your friend,

E. GERRY.

I consider, with yourself, our correspondence on this subject as perfectly confidential.

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

CAMBRIDGE, 2d Nov., 1807.

DEAR MADAM, — Mrs. Gerry's sickness, and indispensable concerns more numerous than usual, have defeated my intentions in regard to the letters which you have kindly communicated

to me. I will now fulfil my promise as far as possible. Their purport, I must confess, as they respect their author and the friend to whom they are addressed, has given me inexpressible pain, and nothing would give me greater pleasure than to promote the reconciliation of a lady and gentleman whom I have been wont to consider as my particular friends, but of this I fear there is not much prospect. The tenor of the letters appears to preclude an answer, — one of the most direct and effectual means for an *éclaircissement;* and the mediation of friends, unless voluntarily authorized and requested by the parties, — a measure, under the existing circumstances, not to be expected, — could promise but little success. I shall therefore, without further preface, submit, with the feelings of a sincere friend, some observations on the subject.

The object of Mr. Adams, as expressed in the first page of his letter of July 11th, was certainly, under the sense of injury which he afterwards expressed, consistent with the character of a gentleman of sense, honor, and reputation, and, had it been carefully pursued, would probably have committed to oblivion the letters themselves, and have terminated to the mutual satisfaction of the parties; but if he did not "conceive resentment," and was not "hastily changed into an enemy," he approached so near to these points as that his best friends must allow he appeared to be in contact with them; and, as it respects yourself, Madam, the impressions on your mind made by the letters more than justifies this observation. The quotation from your History, that "Mr. Adams, his passions and prejudices were *sometimes* too strong for his sagacity and judgment," does not make the impression on my mind which it did make on his feelings. The old Latin adage, "*Nemo sapit omnibus horis*," is, I presume, universally admitted; and Mr. Adams must, in contravention of this maxim, have been at all times and at every period of his life *wise*, if his passions and prejudices were never too strong for his sagacity and judgment. He may take other grounds perhaps in regard to this assertion, and urge that the truth is not always to be spoken or recorded; but, when this assertion is applied to an historian, it must be admitted even by my friend Adams that much may be said on both sides. You are called on for "instances" to verify the quotation; and is it necessary to produce any but what are contained in the letters which we are considering?

The next quotation from the History, viz. that "Mr. Adams was sent to England with a view of negotiating a treaty of commerce, but the Government too sore from the loss of the Colonies, and the nation too much soured by the breach, nothing was done," has produced an explanation from him which in effect admits the fact that "nothing was done," but states as the cause the insertion of a provision in the project of the treaty by himself and Mr. Jefferson, which he well knew Great Britain would never consent to, and which he would not have proposed, had he "been alone in the commission." Admitting his explanation to be perfectly correct, it appears to me that the cause of the defeat of the treaty assigned by the History is much more favorable to the negotiators than that assigned by himself; for the soreness of the Government and sourness of the nation the American Ministers could not prevent, but were under no necessity of inserting the provision which defeated the treaty. Your assertion that "nothing was done" merely regarded the treaty of commerce, which was the primary object of negotiation, and had no relation to the other measures referred to by Mr. Adams.

There is, in the page from which the former quotations are made, "a passage the most exceptionable" to Mr. Adams, which is this: "Unfortunately for himself and his country, he became so enamoured with the British Constitution, and the government, manners, and laws of the nation, that a partiality for monarchy appeared, which was inconsistent with his former professions of republicanism." The whole of this Mr. Adams declares to be totally unfounded; and, whatever opinions he may have expressed on this or any other subject, he has undoubtedly a right to explain them according to his real intention at the time they were expressed; but the fact appears to me candidly to be this: That his writings and conversations have made, throughout the United States, similar impressions with those recorded in the History; and, if they can be effaced by his explanations, it will give great pleasure to all his friends, and make friends of many of his political enemies. This I can affirm from my own knowledge; that, whilst Mr. Adams was a member of Congress, and pending the project of Confederation, he clearly was of opinion that a powerful executive would be requisite for governing the people of this country; and, unless

it was well secured by bars and fences, it would be overwhelmed by the flood of democracy. He predicted that the Confederation would be "a rope of sand," and never approved of that system; but it is difficult for me to ascertain how far his principles and opinions of that period correspond with those he has since entertained, without knowing of both precisely the extent.

As opportunities may offer, I will progress in this business, but must at present conclude, dear Madam, requesting your acceptance, with our friend the General, of the best respects of Mrs. Gerry and your sincere friend

E. Gerry.

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

Cambridge, June 5, 1809.

I have received, my dear Madam, your friendly letter of the 17th of May; and the papers to which you allude are entirely at your disposition. The imminent danger in which we then were (viz., at the period of the town-meeting) of a civil war, and which would inevitably have ensued, in my opinion, had not the modification been made in the non-intercourse act, which took place a few days after my letter had reached Washington, rendered a publication at that time, in my mind, indispensable. The high degree of public irritation made that moment extremely critical, and a drop of blood spilt in anger would have rendered future precautions of no effect. There was no time to be lost in pointing out to the public their imminent danger. Neither could facts be concealed or partially stated, without risking the salvation of the country. Thus circumstanced, to be explicit appeared to me indispensable. The election, Madam, which you allude to, I consider rather as the result of the narrow escape from a civil war, of which every one appears to be sensible, than of the high expectations of justice from a treaty. How far this will be realized can only be determined by time. I hope, however, that the temerity which followed the repeal of the Stamp Act will not be experienced in the present case. The conduct of Parliament on the former occasion, and the view of it then by discerning individuals, is correctly stated in the "History of the late Revolution;" but

it has not now, as it then had, sovereign power and authority over this country, which is now, but was not then, organized, armed, and adequate to defence against any foreign insult or injustice.

I shall, with great pleasure, peruse the replies to the letters you allude to, and think it highly probable that they will both rest on your files. Indeed, it has been always my opinion that, if you do not incline to publish them, the author will not. The style will not admit of putting the letters to the press. It has been my intention, however, to finish my remarks, if ever I am to have any leisure; but my life, for years past, has been, by one means and another, incessantly occupied. I shall, in reviewing this subject, if you will allow me the expression, treat it with the utmost candor, and, if possible, for caustics substitute balsams, between quondam friends. I cannot, however, but admit you have great reasons for your remarks in regard to the versatility of politicians. Mrs. Gerry and my family request you to accept their respectful and affectionate regards; and be assured that I remain, dear Madam, yours very sincerely and respectfully,

E. Gerry.

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

Cambridge, Nov. 7, 1811.

My dear Madam, — I am very happy to learn, by your letters dated the 18th and 29th of October, that you and our other friends at Plymouth are in good health. The welfare of all is to me and my family a subject of delight on every occasion.

On the day of my leaving you, we dined in Quincy, and after dinner I communicated to Mrs. Adams and conferred freely on your message to the President, and afterwards delivered it, agreeably to her advice, to him. After long conversation, in which he was very temperate, he inquired whether he may keep the paper containing the message till our next interview; and I consented, on the express condition that no copy should be taken of it. Soon after, I rode with him to Squantum, to celebrate the anniversary of that place, according to usage; and on the ride we conferred again freely on the subject of the message, and he proposed to proceed by letters to me explanatory of his views. The written paper alluded to above he returned,

and declared that no copy had been taken of it. He said "that his character had been assailed, by friends and foes, in a manner that rendered it of little worth; that, in regard to his letters to you, they contained many things which he wished to remain recorded in his letter-book, to be used or not by his children, according to circumstances; that otherwise he would deliver it up to you, and thus give you an opportunity to cut out the letters relating to yourself, and burn them; that he and his family had formerly a sincere regard and respect for General Warren, yourself, and your family; that to put an end to this uneasiness would be pleasing to him as well as to yourself; that, indeed, he harbored no enmity to you, but that there existed no necessity to make, in your History, any strictures on his conduct; and that the course he had proposed, if my time would admit of it, was perhaps the best to bring this matter to an agreeable issue." I have not yet received a line from him on the subject, and presume it has been owing to his knowledge of the pressure I was under of public business, which has exceeded any that I have ever before experienced. I have all the papers committed by yourself confidentially to me, and shall undoubtedly want them in case of the measure proposed by the President.

The visit of my daughter, which she had fully intended, was prevented by the ill state of health of my son Elbridge, with whom she had made an arrangement to carry her to Plymouth. He went first to Nantucket, and then to Connecticut; and thus filled up his whole vacation. Thomas was also absent when it was ascertained that his brother could not go to Plymouth. Elbridge was under positive engagements to go to Nantucket with his classmate Adan, and to go to Connecticut with our friend Mr. Ben Lee, before he agreed with his sister. My daughters want much to have the honor of paying you a visit, and to include in it every branch of your beloved family. Mrs. Gerry has for a long time given up correspondence, on account of her eyes, but has in view another ride to Plymouth when circumstances shall favor it. She has always had, and still has, the highest respect for, and affectionate attachment to, yourself and family; feelings which pervade my young circle, and make it, if possible, more dear to myself. Accept, I pray you, with all our friends, our unfeigned affection and regards; and be assured, my dear Madam, I remain, very truly and sincerely, your friend,

E. Gerry.

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

CAMBRIDGE, Dec. 19, 1812.

MY DEAR MADAM, — In my letter of the 17th, I omitted to mention that, as your answers to the letters are completed in a manner that applies to every material point, the two letters of mine expressing opinions on the subject, the first of which was dated the 2d of November, 1807, and the others soon after, can be of no further use, and may be returned, if agreeable to you, by the first safe conveyance.

Very respectfully and sincerely your friend,

E. GERRY.

MRS. ABIGAIL ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, Dec. 30, 1812.

MY DEAR MADAM, — Although at the eleventh hour, I will not suffer the year to close upon me without noticing your repeated favors and thanking you for them.

So long as we are inhabitants of this earth, and possess any of our faculties, we cannot be indifferent to the state of our country, our posterity, and our friends. Personally, we have arrived so near the close of the drama that we can experience but few of the evils which await the rising generation. We have passed through one revolution, and happily arrived at the goal; but the ambition, injustice, and plunder of foreign powers have again involved us in war, the termination of which is not given us to see.

If we have not the "gorgeous palaces or the cloud-capped towers" of Moscow to be levelled with the dust, nor a million of victims to sacrifice upon the altar of ambition, we have our firesides, our comfortable habitations, our cities, our churches, and our country to defend, our rights, privileges, and independence to preserve.

And for these are we not justly contending? Thus it appears to me. Yet I hear from our pulpits, and read from our presses, that it is an unjust, a wicked, a ruinous, and unnecessary war.

If I give an opinion with respect to the conduct of our native State, I cannot do it with approbation. She has had much to

complain of, as it respected a refusal of naval protection; yet that cannot justify her in paralyzing the arm of Government, when raised for her defence and that of the nation. A house divided against itself, — and upon that foundation do our enemies build their hopes of subduing us. May it prove a sandy one to them!

You once asked, What does Mr. Adams think of Napoleon? The reply was, I think that, after having been the scourge of nations, he should himself be destroyed. We have seen him run an astonishing career. Is not his measure full? Like Charles XII. of Sweden he may find in Alexander another Peter.

Much, my friend, might we moralize upon these great events; but we know but in part, and we see but in part. The longer I live, the more wrapt in clouds and darkness does the future appear to me.

> "Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
> A hero perish or a sparrow fall:
> Atoms to atoms into ruin hurled,
> And now a bubble burst, and now a world."

With this letter, I forward to you a token of love and friendship. I hope it will not be the less valuable to you for combining, with a lock of my own hair, that of your ancient friend's, at his request. The lock of hair with which you favored me from a head which I shall ever respect, I have placed in a handkerchief pin, set with pearl, in the same manner with the ring. I shall hold it precious. Thus have I disposed of the precious metal sent by my son.[1]

If the spring should find me in health, and my friend also, I shall wish to renew my visit to Plymouth, that I may again embrace you, and be invigorated from a recollection of those days when we held sweet converse together.

With compliments and regards to every member of your family, I subscribe

Your affectionate ABIGAIL ADAMS.

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[1] The ring and pin referred to in this and following letter are now in the possession of Winslow Warren, Esq., at Dedham. — EDS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO MRS. ABIGAIL ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, 26 January, 1813.

MY DEAR MADAM, — *A token of love and friendship.* What can be more acceptable to a mind of susceptibility?

Your very friendly letter, under date December 30, came safely to hand, with its inclosure, within a few days after the date, and would have been earlier acknowledged but for intervening circumstances needless to relate.

I shall with pleasure wear the ring as a valuable expression of your regard; nor will it be the less valued for combining with yours a lock of hair from the venerable and patriotic head of the late President of the United States. This, being at his own request, enhances its worth in my estimation. It is an assurance that he can never forget former amities. For this I thank him. While I view this testimonial of their regard, I shall be daily reminded from whose head the locks were shorn; friends who have been entwined to my heart by years of endearment, which, if in any degree interrupted by incalculable circumstances, the age of us all now reminds us we have more to think of than the partial interruption of sublunary friendships.

"My name has ever been engraved on the heart of MRS. Adams;" and when she informs me she has placed the initials of my name on the faded lock I sent her, and means to wear it on her bosom as an eternal mark of her regard, it cannot but be pleasing to a mind who considers true friendship as one of the best cordials of human life, and wishes a reunion of those hereafter which have been formed, continued, and still exist in sincerity and truth. May ours be prepared and sublimated for an existence in endless peace!

I shall bear in my recollection the very agreeable promise you made in the close of your last, that if the "spring should find you well, and your friend also," you would again visit Plymouth, and *as in former days hold sweet converse together.* A visit from two such aged friends would be gratifying indeed.

Mr. Adams with yourself will accept the respect and regard of your friend.

M. WARREN.

ELBRIDGE GERRY TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

CAMBRIDGE, April 20, 1813.

I have been honored, my dear Madam, by your letter of the 12th, and regret exceedingly the impossibility of my visiting Plymouth previously to my departure for Washington. This is a pleasure which I promise myself after my return home ; and the view which you have taken of the time of our absence will, I hope, be changed to one more lively, when I inform you that our old friend, Judge Lee, at the age of ninety-two, called on me, on my leaving home for France, to bid a final adieu. On my arrival here, fourteen months afterwards, he again called to remind me that he had lived longer than he had intended, for the pleasure of renewing his visit to his friend.

The prologue and epilogue of our friend, the Major, were seasoned with Attic, but not too high for the climate.

The reunion in friendship of two families whom I most respect, and with whom I have had the most amicable and uninterrupted intercourse for forty years, has given me inexpressible pleasure, and presents incontestable evidence that their attachments were founded on their respective veneration and regard for each other, which neither time nor untoward events could obliterate or efface.

Accept, my dear Madam, the cordial wishes of Mrs. Gerry, myself, and family for the health and happiness of yourself and yours, and be ever assured that I remain, most sincerely and respectfully,

Your friend, E. GERRY.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, Nov. 24, 1813.

MADAM, — I have been much to blame for neglecting to acknowledge your obliging favor of September 12th.

I am very much obliged to you for your civilities to my wife, my son, Colonel Smith, and my grand-daughters. My girls have long expressed an earnest desire to see Madam Warren, and

have been highly gratified by their visit, and very grateful for the kind hospitality, the social enjoyments, and instructive conversations they experienced.

. . . . . .

Governor McKean's notice of your brother I thought worth preserving in your family. The oddity of the dialogue, and the particular moment of its composition, were the circumstances that made it rather an object of curiosity than use. I think, however, the traits of character are correct.

I know not, Madam, what your father, your husband, or your brother would think of these times. A mighty effort of nature is in operation, that no understanding below that Providence which superintends and directs it can comprehend. An entire separation in government, at least between America and Europe, seems to be commencing; but what will be its course, when and how it will terminate, and what influence it will have on Asia and Africa, no living man, I believe, will pretend to foresee.

We have acted our parts. The curtain will soon be drawn upon us. We must leave the future to that Providence which has protected the past. This sentiment of duty and interest, I doubt not, Madam, will be approved by you, as I hope it is realized with gratitude and entire confidence and submission by your old friend and respectful, humble servant,

JOHN ADAMS.

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, Feb. 2, 1814.

DEAR MADAM, — I send you a curiosity. Mr. McKean is mistaken in a day or two. The final vote of independence, after the last debate, was passed on the 2d or 3d of July, and the Declaration prepared and signed on the 4th.

What are we to think of history, when, in less than forty years, such diversities appear in the memories of living persons, who were witnesses?

After noting what you please, I pray you to return the letter. I should like to communicate it to Gerry, Paine, and Jefferson, to stir up their pure minds.

The unanimity of the nation in independence, so modestly boasted now by the Tories, is too gross to impose upon all.

With great regard,

JOHN ADAMS.

[Inclosure.]

GOVERNOR McKEAN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PHILADELPHIA, Jan. 7, 1814.

DEAR SIR, — In your favor of 26th November last, you say "that you venture to say that about a third of the people of the Colonies were against the Revolution." It required much reflection before I could fix my opinion on this subject; but, on mature deliberation, I conclude you are right, and that more than a third of influential characters were against it. The opposition consisted chiefly of the Friends, or Quakers, the Menonists, the Protestant Episcopalians, whose clergy received salaries from the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and from the officers of the Crown and Proprietors of Provinces, with their connections, adding the timid and those who believed the Colonies would be conquered, and that of course they would be safe in their persons and property from such conduct, and also have a probability of claiming office and distinction; and also the discontented and capricious of all grades.

I have not heard the specific sum of money Mr. C. J. Marshall received for his copyright of the "Life of Washington," nor have I been able to obtain any certain information concerning it; but, if he obtained a sixth part of what you mention, I think he ought to be contented.

During my protracted life, I neither have had leisure or inclination to write a history, and at my present age it is out of the question. It is true I have been often spoken to, and even solicited, by a great many of my learned acquaintance, to undertake that of the American Revolution, beginning at the year 1760 or before: among them, Dr. Rush, your former correspondent, was not the least anxious.

Though I shall never write a history, I will give you a historical fact respecting the Declaration of Independence, which may amuse, if not surprise.

On the 1st of July, 1776, the question was taken in committee of the whole of Congress, when Pennsylvania, represented by seven members then present, voted against it, four to three. Among the majority were Robert Morris and John Dickinson. Delaware (having only two present, namely, myself and Mr. Read) was divided. All the other States voted in favor of it. The report was delayed until the 4th; and, in the mean time, I sent an express for Cæsar Rodney to Dover, in the County of Kent, in Delaware, at my private expense, whom I met at the State House door, on the 4th of July, in his boots. He resided eighty miles from the city, and just arrived as Congress met. The question was taken. Delaware voted in favor of Independence. Pennsylvania (there being only five members present, Messrs. Dickinson and Morris absent) voted also for it. Messrs. Willing and Humphries were against it. Thus the thirteen States were unanimous in favor of Independence. Notwithstanding this, in the printed public journal of Congress for 1776, Vol. II., it appears that the Declaration of Independence was declared on the 4th of July, 1776, by the gentlemen whose names are there inserted: whereas, no persons signed it on that day; and, among the names there inserted, one gentleman, namely, George Read, Esq., was not in favor of it; and seven were not in Congress on that day, namely, Messrs. Morris, Rush, Clymer, Smith, Taylor, and Ross, all of Pennsylvania, and Mr. Thornton, of New Hampshire; nor were the six gentlemen last named members of Congress on the 4th of July. The five for Pennsylvania were appointed delegates by the convention of that State on the 20th of July, and Mr. Thornton took his seat in Congress, for the first time, on the 4th of November following; when the names of Henry Hinds, of New York, and Thomas McKean, of Delaware, are not printed as subscribers, though both were present in Congress on the 4th of July, and voted for Independence.

Here false colors are certainly hung out. There is culpability somewhere. What I have heard as an explanation is as follows: When the Declaration was voted, it was ordered to be engrossed on parchment, and then signed; and that a few days afterwards a Resolution was entered on the secret journal that no person should have a seat in Congress during that year until he should have signed the Declaration of Independence. After the 4th of July, I was not in Congress for several months, hav-

ing marched with a regiment of Associators, as Colonel, to support General Washington, until the flying camp of ten thousand men was completed. When the Associators were discharged, I returned to Philadelphia, took my seat in Congress, and signed my name to the Declaration on parchment. This transaction should be truly stated, and the then secret journal should be made public. In the manuscript journal, Mr. Pickering, then Secretary of State, and myself, saw a *printed half-sheet* of paper, with the names of the members afterwards in the printed journals stitched in. We examined the parchment, where my name is signed in my own handwriting.

A glimmering of peace appears in the horizon. May it be realized. But every preparation should be made for a continuance of the war. When the British arms have been successful, I have never found their rulers or ministers otherwise than haughty, rude, imperious, nay, insolent. They and their allies have this year been successful, both in the north and south of Europe.

My sight fades very fast, though my writing may not discover it.

God bless you. [Signature cut out.]

JOHN ADAMS TO MRS. MERCY WARREN.

QUINCY, March 24, 1814.

DEAR MADAM, — If weak eyes and weaker fingers had not required more time to write a line than was once necessary for a page, I should sooner have expressed my sincere sympathy with you and your whole family on the loss of your amiable grandchild. We who have lost all our ancestors and collaterals, and several of our children and grandchildren, well know the pungency of grief in younger life under such tender deprivations.

A gloomy philosophy, or a more melancholy religion, disposes men to misery and despair; but a more cheering confidence in the wisdom and benevolence that governs the universe ought to dispose us, not only to submit, but to make the best of every thing.

I can neither applaud nor approve of the lamentations over "Few and evil days," "Days in which there is no pleasure,"

"Vale of tears," "Miseries of life," &c. I have seen no such days, and those who think they have, I fear have made them such by want of reflection.

As you express a curiosity to see letters from a far country, I will enclose the last I have received, dated September 3d. The contents should be confined to your confidential family, for you will at once perceive that, if published, they would excite foolish speculations and scurrilous reflections, without doing any good. You will be so good as to return the letter as soon as may be convenient.

Though my letter began with great gravity and sincerity upon a very serious and afflicting subject, I hope you will permit me, Madam, to conclude with a little gayety. Mrs. A., I presume, will give you a sketch of Madame de Staël, the only child of the celebrated Necker. This lady was married to the Baron de Staël Holstein, the handsomest man in Europe, by an intrigue of the Queen of France, at whose solicitation he had been sent ambassador, by the King of Sweden, to Versailles. This nobleman was particularly attentive to me upon many occasions, and invited me and my family to a diplomatic dinner at his hotel. All this I have premised for the sake of indulging my vanity by repeating a compliment, in the French style, which he made to me: "Madame Adams a infiniment de l'esprit, et mademoiselle, la peau d'un ange:" "Madame Adams has an inexhaustible fund of wit, and Miss Adams has the complexion of an angel." Mrs. Adams will not relate to you this anecdote, and therefore I have taken the ridicule of it upon your friend,

JOHN ADAMS.

MRS. MERCY WARREN TO JOHN ADAMS.

PLYMOUTH, August 4, 1814.

Yours, my dear sir, of the 15th ult., is in the same style of partial friendship which I witnessed many years ago. If the author of the "Group" ever deserved half the encomiums you have lavished on her talent, it ought to be rescued from oblivion. I know of no one living who can or will do this but yourself. You expressed a wish in yours to have your memory refreshed, in consequence of which I enclose a list of the *dramatis personæ*, with their original names.

This little work was committed to the press by yourself the winter before Lexington battle. I am sorry to confirm your assertion, that you have not been to Plymouth since the year 1774. Since that period, I have not had the pleasure of seeing you at the Plymouth fireside. May not this yet be done once more before time closes upon us, where we may converse on "the puny race of idolaters of mammon in the present generation," and compare them with the characters who acted with yourself when you obtained an emancipation from the yoke of foreign slavery for this thoughtless, thankless race, that are continually abusing that glorious effort, and are endeavoring to blast the names and memory of those who achieved this mighty work. Your observations and recollections, with a few of mine which are still retained, might make a curious conversation.

I hope the thread of your life and the powers of your mind may be drawn out as far as you can wish beyond the day which gives peace to the United States. Whether it is or not, I rejoice to see your pious resignation to the will of Him who protracts our time, I trust, for wise and benevolent purposes.

You observe that "France is humbled, Napoleon is banished." Could I look into your bosom, I think I should see curious reflections, though you say nothing farther. Will things remain thus? I say, No. There are seeds of other revolutions, which, in a few short years or months, may pour out torrents of blood and misery on a guilty world. You have a right to forbid Cassandra and every other busy genius from troubling their friends with their imaginary evils or conjectures.

I will now call another theme, and pray that you may soon have letters from your son, gratifying, indeed, to his friends and to his country.

August 11. Thus far had I written, with design to send off by post on the ensuing day, which brought me a billet from Mrs. Adams, introducing a part of your amiable family, whom I met with the usual cordiality which ever warms my bosom on the sight of a friend. But I own myself now a little mortified at their sudden departure. I expected that their visit would have been protracted two or three days longer. I am a little curious to know what hastened their return. Was it the hostile attitude in which they found the ancient town of Plymouth? Or did I not succeed in my endeavors to make them as happy as possible with faded talents in a feeble fabric? Whatever was

the cause, I must regret it, but shall never cease to love the children of my friends so long as I find them worthy, good, and amiable.

Tell my dear Mrs. Adams that I cannot relinquish the hope of one visit more to Your assured friend,

M. Warren.[1]

[1] This was the last letter written to Quincy by Mrs. Warren. She survived a little over two months. Her last message to Mrs. Adams was communicated in a letter from her son, dated the 19th of October. — Eds.

INDEX.

INDEX.

A.

Abington, attempts to cast cannon at, 304.
Acherley, Roger, 324.
Ackerly, *a spy*, 167.
Adams, *Mrs.* Abigail (Smith), 317, 319, 461, 486, 499, 509–511. Letters from, to Mrs. Warren, 493–495, 501. Letter to, from Mrs. Warren, 503.
Adams, Charles Francis, preface to the correspondence between John Adams and Mrs. Warren signed by, 317–319.
Adams, *Pres.* John, 289, 290, 503. His correspondence with Prof. John Winthrop, 291–313. Introduces the Messrs. Hall to Prof. Winthrop, 291. On pay of troops, and the proposal to appoint officers from other colonies than Massachusetts to command them, 294–296. Advises against a separate declaration of independence by one colony, 300. Chief Justice, 307. Eager for declaration of independence, 308, 309. His quarrel with Mrs. Warren, 319–511. Defends himself from the charge of being a monarchist, 324–328, 332. Repels the charge of corruption, 335–338. His views of the principles of the American Revolution, 338–350. When he first thought of independence, 340. His letters to Gen. Brattle on the independence of the Judiciary, 344. His share in the answer of the House of Representatives to Gov. Hutchinson's speech on the powers of Parliament, 346, 347. Author of the report of the committee on the rights of the colonies, 348. In favor of vigorous resistance and separation from Great Britain, 349, 350. Not satisfied with the articles of Confederation, 351. His ideas of a republican form of government, 353. Controverts Mrs. Warren's statement that he began his political career in 1774, 354–358. Anecdote of, 356. Appointed Chief Justice, *ib.* Anecdotes of, 361, 362. His comments on Mrs. Warren's account of the mission to France, 366–374. Letter from, to Samuel Adams, on the diplomatic situation in France, 368–371. His unpleasant situation in France, 367, 368. His expenses as Commissioner, 371–373. Disappointed in expecting to return in the "Alliance," 374. His letter to Congress, 374, 375. His services in the Convention to form a Constitution for Massachusetts, 375. His views of alliance with France, 376. His Commissions to Great Britain, 377–380. His Commission to negotiate a loan, 382, 383. His services in Holland, 384–393. His Commission to make a treaty with Holland, 385. Defends himself from the charge of bad manners and morals, 388, 389. Defends M. Dumas, 389, 390. His residence and associates in Amsterdam, 391, 392. His residence at the Hague, 393. Date of his reception as minister to Holland, 400. Account of political parties in Holland, 400–406. Relates anecdotes to prove the attachment of the Dutch to the Stadtholdership, 402–409. His illness in Holland, 407. Criticises Mrs. Warren's assertion that he was not naturally fitted for the Court of France, 407–411. Reasons for Franklin's dislike of him, 408, 413, 414. His interview with Brissot, 410. With the Duke de Liancourt, *ib.* His account of his labors in France and Holland, 411–416. Disliked by Vergennes, 412, 413, 415. Letter from, to Mrs. Warren (in her praise), quoted, 422. His work in Holland, 425, 426. Declines to treat with Great Britain until the United States are recognized as a nation, 426. Difficulties with Franklin and Vergennes, 427, 428. Claims that he was rightly at the head of the Commission, 430, 431. Considers "republicanism" an indefinite term, 431, 432. Reasons for his defeat in the election of 1801, 433. Election slanders against him, 433–436. Curious

interview with a Pennsylvania German clergyman, 434, 435. Accused of a desire to set up an established (Presbyterian) church, 434–436. On the title to be given to the President, 436–438. On titles generally, 438, 439. Criticises Mrs. Warren's estimate of Francis Dana, 439–447. The status of Americans an open question in the proposed mediation of Austria and Russia, 441–444. Note from, to the Count de Vergennes, 441. Interview with M. Rayneval, 442. Refuses to attend the Congress at Vienna, unless the independence of America is recognized, 443, 444. Remarks on Vergennes and Franklin, 444, 445. Praises Mr. Dana's high qualities and aptness for diplomatic employment, 446, 447. Commission to, with Franklin and others, to negotiate for peace, 457–459. Commission to, with Franklin and others, to accept the mediation of Germany and Russia, 459, 460. His various residences in France, 461, 462. Enmity of the Warren family to, 463, 464. His detractors, 464. His labors on the question of the independence of the colonies, 465–469. Resolution proposed by him, in conjunction with R. H. Lee, 465, 466. The story of his invoking the God of Eloquence, 466–469. His speech on independence, 467–469. Anecdote of the Abbé Raynal, 468, 469. Claims credit for industry, 469, 470. His policy with France while President, 470, 471. Remarks on ambition, 471, 472, 474. His views of republics, 472–474. Happiness in retirement, 475. Abstained, as Vice-President, from interference in patronage, 476. Jealousy among men in public life, 477, 478. His opinions at different times of King, 487; of Franklin, 488. His opinion of Napoleon, 494. Mr. Gerry's views on the correspondence between, and Mrs. Warren, 496–498. Mr. Gerry acts as mediator, 499, 500. Token of friendship sent to Mrs. Warren, 502, 503. Letters from, to Mrs. Warren, 504–506, 508, 509. Letter to, from Gov. McKean, 506–508. Letter to, from Mrs. Warren, 509–511. His "Defence of the Constitutions of America," 332.

Adams, *Pres.* John Quincy, 336, 488.

Adams, *Gov.* Samuel, 312, 324, 326, 333, 335, 336, 341, 346, 347, 353, 372, 373, 395, 477, 478. Letter to, from John Adams (in France), 368–371.

Adams, William, 152.

Adan, John Richardson, 500.

Agnew, *Gen.* James, 76.

Alden, *Col.* Ichabod, 65.

Alden, *Capt.* ——, 84.

Alexander *of Macedonia, the Great*, 471.

Alexander I. *of Russia*, 502.

Allen, *Rev.* Thomas, (?) 67.

"Alliance," *frigate*, 367, 374, 412.

Ambition, natural to all men, 471, 472, 475.

American Army, see "Army, American."

American envoys not received by European Courts, 440–446.

American paper money, proposal of Vergennes in regard to, 412.

American Revolution, John Adams's principles of the, 338–350. About one third of the colonists opposed to, 506.

Amherst, Jeffrey, *Baron*, 340.

Andover, powder-mill at, 304.

Andrews, Benjamin, 93.

Anstruther, *Col.* John, 82.

Anti-Federalists, 464, 471, 485.

Anville, Nicolas de la Rochefoucauld, *Duc d'*, 339.

Apthorp, *Rev.* East, 343.

Armand, *Col.* Charles, *Marquis de la Rouerie*, 87.

Arms and ordnance, arrival of, at Portsmouth, 43, 44, 46. Arrival of, from France, 50. To be removed from the coast, 51, 52.

Armstrong, John, 407, 408.

Army, American, queries in regard to raising the, 3, 4. Winter quarters of the, 1779–80, 130, 135–140; 1780–81, 171–173, 175; 1781–82, 228, 229. Returns of, 231, 233, 234, 237, 240. Strength of, 251. Good feeling of the, with the French troops, 278. Well fed and well clothed the last winter of the war, 280. See "Clothing," "Provisions," "Massachusetts Line," "Officers," &c.

Army, British, reinforced, 120. Strength of, in April, 1782, 249, 250.

Arnold, *Gen.* Benedict, 26, 39, 67, 162, 165, 167, 246.

Artillery, the army not well supplied with, 55. Arrival of, from France, 78. Winter quarters of the park of, 1780–81, 172.

Ashley, *Major* Moses, 275.

Atlee, *Col.* Samuel J., 17.

Attendorff, see "Ottendorf."

"Aurora," *Philadelphia newspaper*, 474.

Austin, Jonathan Loring, 440.

Austin, *Major* Jonathan Williams, 44.

B.

Bacon, Francis, *Lord Verulam*, 324.

Badlam, *Lt.-Col.* Ezra, 254, 258, 266, 276.

Bailey, *Col.* John, 116.

Ballard, *Major* William Hudson, 141, 177.

Bannister, *Capt.* Seth, 116, 254, 278.
Barlow, Joel, 376, 395.
Barneveldt, John *van*, 401, 403.
Barras, Louis, *Comte de*, 223.
Bauman, *Major* Sebastian, 147, 152.
Beach, Benjamin, 404.
Beekman, John M., 205.
Bell, *Capt.* Thomas (?), 38.
Benson, Egbert, *LL.D.*, 267, 268.
Benton, *Capt.* ——, 273.
Béringer, *M., Sec'y to French Legation at the Hague*, 441.
Bernard, *Gov.* Francis, 336.
Béville, *Gen. de, French Quartermaster-Gen.*, 239, 264, 265.
Bicker, H., 387, 392.
Bigelow, *Col.* Timothy, 141.
Birch, *Gen.* Samuel, 275, 276.
Bishops for America, 343.
Blackden, *Major* ——, 80, 81.
Blackstone, *Sir* William, 324.
Blaine, *Col.* Ephraim, 167.
Blair, Robert, 221.
Bolinbroke, Henry St. John, *Viscount*, 324.
Bond, *Dr.* Thomas, 237.
Bond, *Col.* William, 26, 28.
Borre, *Chevalier* Prudhomme *de*, appointed a Brigadier-General, 49.
Boston, instructions issued by Washington to Ward on leaving, 4–8. Burgoyne's army prisoners at, 77. Gen. Howe abandons the idea of retaking, 94, 96. Affray in, with French sailors, 95. Fortification of the harbor of, 98, 101, 297, 300, 303. Gen. Gates appointed to command at, 103, 104. Evacuation of, 296, 297.
"Boston Chronicle," *newspaper*, 464, 474.
"Boston Gazette," *newspaper*, 341, 356.
Bostwick, ——, 161.
Boudinot, Elias, 83.
Boullanger, Nicolas Antoine, 376, 395.
Bounty for the army, 23, 127, 157, 158, 196.
Bounty on the manufacture of saltpetre, 304, 306.
Bowdoin, *Gov.* James, 359, 474.
"Braintree Instructions," the, 341.
Brandywine, battle of the, 74.
Brattle, *Gen.* William, 344.
Bread, scarcity of, in winter of 1779, 146, 148, 153.
Brigade-Majors, pay of, 49.
Brissot de Warville, Jean Pierre, 410.
Brookfield, to be a depot for stores, 54. Sulphur in, 304.
Brown, Andrew, 464.
Brown, *Capt.* Gawen, 99.
Brown, *Lieut.* Richard, death of, 89 *n.*
Bryant, *Capt.* David, 11.
Bryant, George, 333.
Bud, *Mr., house of, near West Point*, 137.
Bunker Hill, 5. Battle of, 292–294.
Burgh, James, 356.
Burgoyne, *Gen.* John, 65, 67, 71, 75, 77, 79, 80, 82, 89 *n.* His army prisoners at Boston, 77.
Burnet, *Bishop* Gilbert, 422.
Burr, *Col.* Aaron, 433, 452, 474, 484, 494.
Burtis, William, 168.
Butler, *Col.* Zebulon, 235.

C.

Cadwallader, *Gen.* John, 33.
Cahos, ——, *sentenced by court-martial*, 197.
Calkoen, Hendrik, 392.
Callender, James Thompson, 464.
Cambridge, 6. Burgoyne's army prisoners at, 77.
Camden, *S. C.*, 214. Gates's defeat at, 163.
Campaign stories during election of 1800, 433–436.
Campbell, *Col.* Donald, 166.
Canada, secret expedition to, proposed in 1777, 68. Washington's opinion in regard to, *ib.*
Canfield, *Col.* Samuel, 257, 276, 277.
Cannon, attempts to cast, in the colonies, 298, 300, 304. Scarcity of, 313.
Carleton, *Sir* Guy, *Lord Dorchester*, 51, 260, 262, 269, 271–273.
Carmarthen, Francis Godolphin, *Marquis of*, 322, 323.
Cartridge-box, new kind of, 62.
Cartwright, *Capt.* Thomas, 129.
Catherine II. *of Russia*, 440, 445, 454. Reasons for refusing to receive Mr. Dana, 440–444. Mediation offered by, 441–444, 459, 460.
Cavalry, 80, 81.
Cérisier, Antoine Marie, his "Grundwettige Herstellung," 406.
Chambers, *Capt.* Matthew (?), 187.
Chandler, *Col.* Gardiner, 340.
Chaplains, pay of, 49. Number of, 67.
Charles II. *of England*, 438.
Charles III. *of Spain*, 440.
Charles XII. *of Sweden*, 502.
Charleston, *So. Car.*, 159. Strength of British army in, 1782, 249.
Charlestown, *Mass.*, burning of, 292.
"Charon," British ship burned at Yorktown, 225.
Chatham, *Earl of*, see "Pitt, William."
Chaumont, Le Ray *de*, 372.
"Chronicle," see "Boston Chronicle."
Chester, *Col.* John, 15.
Chesterfield, Philip Dormer Stanhope, *Earl of*, 420.
Church, *Col.* Benjamin, 339.
Church, Edward, 464.
Clap, Thomas, 342.
Clark, *Lieut.* James, 85.
Clarke, *Commissary* Jonathan, 92.
Cleft, *Major* Waterman, 121, 122, 126.

Cleveland, *Capt.* ——, 88.
Clinton, *Gov.* George, 8, 12, 13, 15, 17, 31, 53, 134, 138, 139, 146, 153, 169, 170, 177, 283.
Clinton *Sir* Henry, 87, 90, 97, 99, 103, 110, 119, 120, 159, 161, 162, 205, 207, 226.
Clinton, *Gen.* James, 31, 46, 168, 170, 176, 179, 180, 284.
Clothing for the army, 92, 94–96, 99, 132, 149, 171, 184, 192, 216, 229, 233, 234, 236, 238, 242–244, 270. Scarcity of, among the Massachusetts troops, 56–58, 60. Supplies of, badly managed, 59. Difficulty in obtaining, 93. Distribution of, 149, 160, 180. Scarcity of, 171. Arrival of, from Spain, 213. Supplies of, 229.
Clymer, George, 507.
Coane, *Lieut.* Connolly, 83.
Cobbett, William (Porcupine), 464.
Cochran, *Dr.* John, 192, 196, 207, 233.
Cockle, James, 340, 360, 380.
Cogswell, *Major* Thomas, question as to the rank of, 141–146.
Cole, *Capt.* Albert (?), 108.
Colonies, report of the Committee of Congress on the rights of the, 348, 349.
Colt, Peter, 79.
Colton, Isaac, 239.
Colvill, William, 98.
Commissary's department, 78, 79, 257.
Commissions. To John Adams, as minister to Great Britain, 378, 379; for making a treaty of commerce with England, 379, 380; to negotiate a loan in Holland, 382, 383; to make a treaty of commerce with Holland, 385. To Adams, Franklin, Jay, Laurens, and Jefferson, to treat for peace, 457–459. To the same persons to accept the mediation of Germany and Russia, 459, 460.
Commissioners to France, expenses of, 370–372. Mr. Adams's views on the number of, *ib.*
Commissioners to make a treaty of peace, appointment of, 413, 414, 426, 431.
Condorcet, Marie Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat, *Marquis de*, 473.
Confederation, articles of, 310, 351, 352, 497, 498.
Congress, Continental, report of committee of, on the rights of the colonies, 348, 349. Commissions to foreign countries, issued by, 378–380, 382, 383, 385, 457–460. Proceedings of, on the question of a title for the President of the United States, 437. Secret Journals of, 382, 507. Journal of, cited, 507.
Connecticut, delay in troops from, 60. Recruits from, 117. Number of militia still expected from, 1781, 219.
Connecticut line of the army, 121, 122, 126, 175, 177, 178. Winter-quarters of the, 1780, 172.
Constitution of the United States, influence of Mr. Adams's "Defence" in the adoption of the, 332, 333.
Continental Congress, see "Congress."
Continental money, 56. Proposal of Vergennes in regard to, 412.
Contractors, dispute between, and the army, 267, 268.
"Convention Troops," 77, 82, 89, 91, 102–104, 209.
Conway, *Gen.* Thomas, 52.
Cooper, Samuel, *D.D.*, 344.
Corne, Peter, 276.
Corryel's Ferry, 28.
Cornwallis, Charles Cornwallis, *Marquis*, 26, 214, 222, 223, 225, 226. Surrender of, at Yorktown, 228.
Corny, Louis Ethis *de*, 161.
Courts of Justice, suspension of, in Massachusetts, 302, 306–308.
Crane, *Col.* John, 157, 158, 192, 251, 255.
Crommelin, ——, 392.
Curtis, *Major* William, 86.
Cushing, Thomas, 46, 326, 346, 477, 478.

D.

Daking, see "Dorking."
Dana, Francis, 296, 439, 454, 455. Mrs. Warren's estimate of, 440. Refusal of the Empress of Russia to receive him, 440–444. His treatment in Russia, 444, 445. His qualifications for diplomatic position, 446, 447.
Daniels, Elisha, 115.
Darby, *Major* Samuel, 182, 183.
Dauphin of France, celebration of the birth of the, 261.
Davis, *Capt.* Amasa, 239.
Davis, *Capt.* Robert, 88.
Davis, *Lieut.* William, 99.
Dawes, *Major* Thomas, 70.
Day, *Sir* James, 152.
Day, *Capt.* Luke, 278, 282.
Dayton, *Gen.* Elias, 279.
Deane, Silas, 49, 57, 366, 367, 390, 408, 413, 428, 439, 440. His expenses in France, 371.
De Borre, *Chevalier* Prudhomme, 49.
Declaration of Independence, when signed, 505. Gov. McKean's account of the passage of the, 507.
De la Lande & Fynje, *Messrs.*, 392, 416.
Delancey, *Gen.* Oliver, 9, 38, 183.
De Lolme, John Louis, 324.
Desertion from the army, 56, 68, 207, 221, 238, 239, 245, 256, 263, 285.
De Staël, see "Staël-Holstein."

De Vienne, *Marquis*, 100.
DeWitt, Cornelis, 388, 401, 403.
DeWitt, Jan, 388, 401, 403.
Dickinson, John, 302, 332, 333, 350, 355, 466, 468, 507. His "Farmer's Letters," 356.
Digby, *Admiral* Robert, 225, 228.
Discharges from the army, 194, 195.
Dobbs's Ferry, 175. Orders to the commandant at, 201, 202.
Dorking (Daking), William, 275.
Dorrance, *Capt.* ——, 273, 274.
Douglas, *Col.* William, 15.
Drew, *Capt.* Sylvanus, 7.
Duane, James, 466.
Duane, William, 464.
Du Coudray, Phil. Chas. Jean Baptiste Tronson, 57.
Dumas, Charles William Frederick, 387, 391, 393, 397. Mr. Adams defends the character of, 389, 390.
Duncan, *Capt.* ——, 240.
Dunckerley, *Adj.* Joseph, 86.
Dunlap, Edward, 221.
Du Portail-Lébegue, *Chevalier* Louis, 98, 101, 140.
Durkee, *Col.* John, 16.

E.

Eckhart, Philip, confined on suspicion, 51. Released, *ib.*
Edes, *Lieut.* Joseph, 186.
Edgar, *Capt.* John, 232.
Eldred, *Lieut.* ——, 191.
Election, first, for President, 334. Of 1800, 336, 433–436.
Eliot, Andrew, *D.D.*, 356.
Elizabeth *of England*, 446.
England, see "Great Britain."
Enos, *Col.* Roger, 224.
Enville, see "Anville."
Episcopacy, resistance to the establishment of, one of Mr. Adams's principles of the Revolution, 343.
Episcopalians, opposed to the separation from England, 506.
Erskine, *Sir* William, 76.
Estaing, Charles Hector Theodat, *Comte d'*, 90–92, 97, 98, 124.
Europe, every power in, except France had refused to receive a minister from the United States, 440.
Ewing, *Gen.* James, 33.
Expenses of the Commissioners to France, 370–372.

F.

Fairfield, *Conn.*, burned by the British, 109.
Faneuil, ——, 48, 69.
Farrington, *Lt.-Col.* Thomas, 56.
Federalists, 470, 471, 476.
Fellows, *Gen.* John, 15, 217.
Fenno, John Ward, 464.
Ferris, Joshua, 181.
Fishkill, *N. Y.*, 177, 189, 190, 193.
Fizeau, see "Horneca, Fizeau, and Grand."
Flags of truce, 119, 257, 260, 261, 276, 277.
Fleet, arrival of the French, at Newport, 161.
Fletcher, Samuel, 92.
Flowers, *Capt.* Samuel, 154.
Forage for the army, 36, 39, 130, 172, 174, 184, 187. An important foraging party, 174, 175.
Forman, *Gen.* David, 205.
Forster, *Dr.* Isaac, 108.
Fortescue, *Sir* John, 324.
Fort Granby, capture of, 215.
Fort Mott, capture of, 215.
Fort Washington, capture of, 23.
Foster, *Deacon* Thomas, 357, 365.
"Fox," *frigate*, 69.
France, arrival of arms from, 43, 50, 52, 78. Alliance with, 85. Arrival of minister from, 122. Celebration of the birth of the Dauphin of, 261. Resistance to, one of Adams's principles of the Revolution, 338–340. Adams opposed to alliance with, 350. Adams's letter on Commissioners to, 368–371. Expenses of the Commissioners to, 370–372. Pres. Adams keeps peace with, 470–471. See "French Army," "French Fleet."
Franklin, Benjamin, 293, 312, 322, 325, 367, 368, 371–373, 384, 390, 395, 407–409, 411–414, 420, 421, 424, 426–431, 440, 444, 446, 447, 449, 455, 458, 461, 462, 488, 489. Not liked by Mr. Adams, 408, 409, 413, 414. Opinions of Mr. Adams in regard to, 426–428, 431, 488. Commissioned, with Adams and others, to negotiate for peace, 457–459. Commissioned with the same, to accept the mediation of Germany and Russia, 459, 460.
Franks, *Major* David S., 165.
Frederick II. *of Prussia*, 323, 440.
French Army, 69, 173. Strength of the, in America (1782), 252. Good feeling between the, and the American, 278, 279.
French fleet, 225. Affray between sailors and people in Boston, 95. Arrival of the, in Newport, 161 Departure of the, 278.
Freneau, Philip, 464.
Frye, *Lieut.* ——, 182, 264.
Furloughs, 37, 130, 138, 139, 191. Num- of, 84. Abuse of, *ib.*
Fynje, see "De la Lande and Fynje."

G.

Gage, *Gov.* Thomas, 355, 359, 365.
Gaine, Hugh, 27.
Galloway's House, 248.
Galvan, *Major* ——, 197, 198.
Gansevoort, *Col.* Peter, 177.
Garanger, ——, *a French officer*, 165.
Gardiner, *Capt.* ——, 125.
Gardner, ——, 263.
Gates, *Gen.* Horatio, 26, 28, 94, 101, 103, 104, 107, 125, 160, 163, 164.
George III. *of England*, 307, 322, 336, 378, 379.
George IV. *of England*, 336.
Georgia, fleet sails from New York for, 148.
Gérard, Conrad Alexander, 97.
Germantown, battle of, 76.
Germany, Emperor of, offers mediation to the powers at war, 412, 413.
Gerry, *Gov.* Elbridge, 319, 338, 381, 461, 505. His observations on the correspondence between John Adams and Mrs. Warren, 496–498. Acts as a mediator, 499, 500. Letters from, to Mrs. Warren, 495–501, 504.
Gerry, *Mrs.* Elbridge, 495, 499, 500, 504.
Gerry, Elbridge, *Jr.*, 500.
Gerry, Thomas, 500.
Gibbs, *Major* Caleb, 175, 208.
Gilbert, *Ensign* Elisha, 147.
Gilbert, Peter C., 262.
Gilchrist, Charles, 241.
Gimat, *Chevalier* ——, 197.
Glover, *Gen.* John, 47, 82, 88, 110–114, 119, 123, 133, 135, 136, 159, 160, 172, 178, 258, 269, 280.
Gouvion, *Lt.-Col.* Jean Baptiste, 126, 135, 176.
Government, John Adams's views on, 324–328. Differences of, among the States, under the Articles of Confederation, 351, 352. The earliest stipulation for a republican form was in the Constitution, 352.
Grand, *Sir* George, 392.
Grant, *Gen.* James, 76.
Grasse-Tilly, François Joseph Paul, *Comte de*, 220, 222, 224.
Great Britain, Commission of John Adams as minister to, 377–380. Treaty of peace with, 413, 414, 426–428. Commissions to Adams and others to negotiate with, 457–459. Attempted treaty of commerce with, 497.
Greaton, *Col.* John, 26, 28, 59, 65, 264, 279.
Greene, *Col.* Christopher, 160, 161, 164, 167, 285.
Greene, *Gen.* Nathaniel, 19, 22, 23, 61, 93, 95, 96, 131, 135, 165, 168, 204, 214, 215.
Greene, *Gov.* William, 213.
Grey, *Gen.* Charles, 94, 96, 97.
Gridley, Jeremiah, 324, 340, 357.
Gridley, *Gen.* Richard, 5.
Grotius, Hugo, 401, 403.
"Group," the, by Mrs. Warren, 509, 510.
Gunboat on the North River, 203.
Gunnery, experiments in, 152.
Gustavus III. *of Sweden*, 509.
Gyselaer, C., *de, Pensionary of Dort*, 387.

H.

Hall, Aquila, 291, 292.
Hall, Josias Carvill, 291, 292.
Hamilton, Alexander, 333, 334, 433, 437, 452, 464, 470, 473, 474, 484.
Hamilton, *Gen.* James Inglis, 79, 103.
Hancock, Ebenezer, 43, 50, 52, 60, 62, 158.
Hancock, *Gov.* John, 188, 196, 217, 254, 293, 333, 346, 477, 478.
Hand, *Gen.* Edward, 135, 282.
Hanley, David, 157.
Hardenburgh, ——, death of, 11.
Hare, Robert, 311.
Hare, ——, *brother to Robert*, 311.
Harrington, James, 324.
Harris, *Sir* James, 455.
Harrison, *Col.* Charles, 115.
Harrison, Richard, 278.
Hartley, David, 429.
Harvard College, 291. Removal of apparatus, &c., from Cambridge, 292.
Haslett, *Col.* John, 15, 17.
Hawley, *Major* Joseph, 345, 346.
Hay, *Col.* Udney, 140, 146, 151, 180, 184, 185, 187, 188.
Hazen, *Col.* Moses, 130, 132, 135, 166, 177, 180, 190, 193, 197, 198, 221, 230, 251.
Heath, *Gen.* William, asked concerning organization of the army, 3, 4. Ordered to detach troops to meet expected attack on New York, 9, 10. To co-operate with Gov. Clinton, 12. To repair to head-quarters, 13. To obstruct roads leading to Kingsbridge, 14. Reinforcements to be sent to him, 15. Requested to hasten the choice of officers, 18. Ordered to guard the posts and passes of the Highlands, 19–22. Notified of the surrender of Fort Washington, 23. To send troops to Washington, 26. Ordered to join Lee at Pittstown, 27. To return to his former station, 28. Nova Scotia Indians placed under his command, 29. To forward troops to Washington, 30, 31. News of the battle of Trenton sent him, 32. An attack on New York suggested to, 38. Ordered to hasten the despatch of troops from Boston, 42. Authorized to draw arms for Massachusetts troops, 46. Notified of attack on Ticonderoga, 51. A request

of, for field-pieces refused, 55. Urged to forward troops, 66. Advised to discourage the application of French officers, 69. The elaboratory at Springfield in his command, 73. To supply the Continental vessels with ammunition, 74. Urged to delay the departure of Burgoyne's troops, 77. Letter to, introducing Major Blackden, 80. Letter to, introducing Capt. Hopkins, 81. Communicates resignation of Col. Lee and Major Swazy, 84. Informed of the alliance with France, 85. Advised to assist in intercepting a fleet with provisions for the British, 90. To urge measures for supply of the army, 93. Cautioned not to keep superfluous stores in Boston, 95. To co-operate with Gen. Du Portail in the fortification of Boston, 98. Authorized to grant discharges to officers, 99. Directions to, in regard to removal of Convention troops from Boston, 103. Requested to join the main army, 105, 106. Ordered to send troops to Crompond, 109. To gain accurate news of the force at Verplanck's Point, 114. To fortify a spot in the mountain gorge, 115. To send an officer to New London to get information of the French fleet, 124, 125. Concerning commissions for the Massachusetts line, 127. To go into winter-quarters, 130. Asks for leave of absence, 131. Complains of a scarcity of flour, 133, 134. Command of the North River posts assigned to, 135. Instructions to, as commander on the North River, 136–140. Payment of troops in his command, 147. Directions to, in regard to clothing the troops, 149, 150. Leave of absence granted to, 152. Gen. Poor placed under his command, 154. Requested to make a return of the Massachusetts troops, 156. Arrives at Roxbury, *ib.* Asks to have recruiting officers sent to Massachusetts, 157. Authorized to allow a bounty to men enlisted for the artillery, 158. To repair road from Newport to Providence, 161. Returns to West Point, 164. Want of supplies for the Highland posts, 167. To send troops to Albany to Gen. Clinton, 170. Winter-quarters for 1780–81, 171, 172. To send out a strong foraging party, 174. In regard to trial of Major Reid, 180, 181. Ordered to forage in Westchester County, 184. Commends conduct of Col. Pritchard, 186. His complaint of orders issued for the government of the post at Fishkill, 189, 190, 193, 194. Ordered to send a detachment of troops to the Southern army, 197, 198. To secure West Point, *ib.* Concerning chain across the river at, 201. His rations and extra expenses as commanding officer, 204. Informs Washington of a plot against his life or liberty, 205. Concerning Burgoyne's troops (prisoners), 209. Directed to go to the New England States and arrange a system of supplies for the army, *ib.* His instructions, 210–212. To urge forward the new levies, 214, 216. To rejoin the army immediately, 218. The application of the Stockbridge Indians referred to him, 219, 220. To forward supplies to the main army, 221. Informed of the surrender of Yorktown, 228. Winter-quarters, 1781–82, 229, 230. To make an accurate return of the troops under his command, 231, 234, 237. Compelled to order Gen. McDougall under arrest, 238. His storage of arms and magazines at West Point, 242. To concert with Gen. Schuyler an expedition against the vessels in Lake Champlain, 244, 245. Informed of the strength of the enemy in New York, and his opinion asked in regard to the campaign of 1782, 249–252. Asks for leave of absence, 252. Concerning the recruits from Massachusetts, 256, 263. Recommends Col. Greaton to be made Brigadier-General, 264. A misunderstanding with Col. Putnam, 266, 267. To prepare for referees in the dispute with Messrs. Sands & Co., 267, 268. Appointed to act for America in the matter of the court-martial of Capt. Lippencott, 271. His instructions, 271–273. Gen. McDougall declines to prosecute the charges he had proposed to make against him, 275. Leave of absence granted to, *ib.* Informed of the treaty with Holland, 279. To rejoin the army, 282. To superintend the army in Washington's absence, 283. His "Memoirs" cited, 269 *n.* See also "Washington, *Pres.* George."

Heister, Daniel, 84, 86.

Henchman, Daniel, 334.

Henley, *Col.* David, 57, 76, 77.

Henshaw, ——, 299.

Heywood, *Capt.* Benjamin, 119.

Higginson, Stephen, 281.

Highlands, Gen. Heath's division to guard the passes of the, 19–22.

Hill, *Capt.* Jeremiah, 75.

Hinds, Henry, 507.

Hobart, John Sloss, *LL.D.*, 268.

Hodshon, John, 392, 416.

Hoiker, John, 104.

Holland, treaty with, 279. Commission to John Adams to make a treaty with, 385. Date of Mr. Adams's reception as minister to, 400. Account of political parties in, 400–406. Reasons why the people of, favored the American cause, 401. Anecdotes showing the

attachment of the people of, to the Stadtholdership, 402–406. Negotiation of treaty with, and loan, 425, 426, 490.
Hollis, Thomas, 356.
Hooft, Gerrit, *Burgomaster of Amsterdam*, 391.
Hope, *banking-house of*, 392.
Hopkins, *Commodore* Ezekiel, 297, 300.
Hopkins, *Gov.* Stephen, 483.
Hopkins, *Capt.* ——, 81, 114, 115.
Horneca, Fizeau, and Grand, *Messrs.*, 392.
Horton, *Capt.* ——, 89.
Hosbrook, Elias, 255.
Hovey, James, 342.
Howe, Richard, *Earl*, 93, 312.
Howe, *Gen.* Robert, 112–114, 119, 121, 123, 124, 128, 134, 152, 157, 192, 227, 253.
Howe, *Sir* William, 21, 26, 27, 48, 61, 64, 65, 67, 71, 72, 75, 76, 79, 83, 312.
Howland, Southworth, 342.
Huddy, *Capt.* Joshua, 271, 272.
Hudson's Bay, La Pérouse's attack on, 278.
Hudson River, passage on the ice from New York to the Highlands, 1779, 155.
Hughes, *Major* Hugh, 40, 184.
Hughes, *Capt.* John, 176.
Hull, *Gen.* William, 141, 184, 187, 189, 264. Question as to his rank, 141–146.
Humphreys, Charles, 507.
Humphreys, *Col.* David, 186, 188, 461.
Huntington, *Gen.* Ebenezer, 38.
Huntington, *Gen.* Jedediah, 107, 119, 120, 178, 240.
Huntington, Samuel, 379, 380, 383, 385, 459, 460.
Hutchins, *Capt.* Nathaniel, 86.
Hutchinson, *Col.* Israel, 12.
Hutchinson, *Gov.* Thomas, 336, 340, 343, 346, 355, 365. Answer of the House of Representatives to his speech on the powers of Parliament, 345, 347.

I.

Ice, passage on the, from New York to the Highlands, 155.
Independence, question of, 298, 300–302, 305, 306, 309, 340. Mr. Adams's speech on, 467–469. Declaration of, 312. Declaration of, when signed, 505. Gov. McKean's account of the passage of the Declaration of, 507.
Independence of the Judiciary, Mr. Adams's letters to Gen. Braitle on the, 344. The, one of John Adams's principles of the Revolution, 344–346.
Indians, offer of services of, in the Revolution, 29, 219.
Inglis, *Rev.* Charles, *D.D.*, 28.
Ingraham, see "Sigourney and Ingraham."
Innovation, rage for, in Massachusetts, 308, 310.
Inoculation for small-pox, 41, 42, 192, 196, 203, 233, 237, 245.
Invalid corps, ordered to West Point, 215.
Irvine, *Gen.* William, 168.
Izard, Ralph, 368, 371, 408, 413, 428, 440.

J.

Jackson, *Col.* Henry, 57, 59, 76, 77, 88, 99, 100, 143, 198.
James II. *of England*, 438.
Jarvis, *Dr.* Charles, 333.
Jarvis, Leonard, 43.
Jay, John, 333, 336, 364, 381, 407, 408, 410, 413, 414, 417, 420, 426, 428, 429, 444, 447, 449, 458. President of Congress, 110, 133. Commissioned, with Adams and others, to negotiate for peace, 457–459. Commissioned, with the same, to accept the mediation of Germany and Russia, 459, 460.
Jealousy in public men, 478.
Jefferson, *Pres.* Thomas, 182, 318, 322, 336, 337, 364, 376, 398, 407, 408, 414, 415, 430, 439, 449, 452, 458, 461, 462, 464, 474, 475, 477, 481, 485, 497, 505. Commissioned, with Adams and others, to negotiate for peace, 457–459. Commissioned, with the same, to accept the mediation of Germany and Russia, 459, 460.
John, Saint, *Evangelist*, 478.
Johnson, Daniel, 342.
Johnson, *Lady* Mary, 37.
Johnson, *Capt.* ——, 124.
Jones, *Commodore* John Paul, 374, 430.
Jones, *Ensign* Winsor, 86.
Joseph II. *of Austria*, mediation offered by, 441–444, 459, 460.
Jotham, *Capt.* ——, 164.
Judiciary, the independence of the, a principle of the Revolution, 344–346. Mr. Adams's letters to Gen. Brattle, *ib.*

K.

Keith, *Major* James, 273.
Keith's tavern, 27, 30.
Keppel, *Admiral Lord* Augustus, 97.
King, Rufus, 487, 488.
Kingsbridge, 174. Roads leading to, to be obstructed, 14.
King's ferry, 165, 177, 178, 185. Works at, 131, 138.
Knox, *Gen.* Henry, 8, 10, 11, 19, 35, 43, 52, 54, 59, 73, 123, 125, 165, 178, 196, 202, 242, 273, 277, 344.
Knyphausen, Dodo Henri, *Baron*, 33.
Kosciuszko, Thaddeus, 168.

L.

Lafayette, Gilbert Motier, *Marquis de*, 173, 207, 208, 220, 226.
Lake Champlain, British vessels frozen in, 244, 245.
Lamb, *Gen.* John, 110, 166, 251.
Langdon, John, *LL.D.*, 50.
Langdon, *Capt.* John, 99.
Lanspach, see "Lossberg"
La Pérouse, Jean François de Galaup, *Comte de*, 278.
La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, François Alexandre Frédéric, *Duc de*, 473. Interview of, with John Adams, 410.
Larvey, *Sergeant* James, 194.
"La Sensible," *frigate*, 369.
Lasher, *Col.* John, 22.
Laurens, Henry, 382, 383, 386, 407, 408, 414, 415, 417, 419, 430, 449, 458. His Commission to Holland, 419, 460, 461. Commissioned, with Adams and others, to negotiate for peace, 457–459. Commissioned, with Adams and others, to accept the mediation of Germany and Russia, 459, 460.
Laurens, *Col.* John, 220.
Lawrence, Amory A., 283 *n.*
Lawrence, *Judge* John, 205, 262.
Lawrence, *Rev.* William, 284 *n.*
Leach, ——, 117.
Learned, *Gen.* Ebenezer, 82, 83, 116.
Ledyard, *Dr.* Isaac, 237.
Lee, Arthur, 367, 368, 390, 395, 408, 411–413, 424, 438, 440. His expenses as Commissioner at Paris, 371, 372.
Lee, Benjamin, 500.
Lee, *Gen.* Charles, 21, 27.
Lee, *Col.* Henry, 118, 215.
Lee, *Lieut.* Israel, 124.
Lee, *Judge* Joseph, 504.
Lee, Richard Henry, 371, 437. His share in the Declaration of Independence, 465, 466.
Lee, William, 440.
Lee, *Col.* William Raymond, 57, 59, 62, 76, 77, 84, 88.
Leslie, *Gen.* Alexander, 279.
Lewis, *Lieut.* Joseph, 176.
Liancourt, see "La Rochefoucauld."
Lincoln, *Gen.* Benjamin, 18, 19, 30, 37, 192, 200, 231, 240, 254, 281.
Lincoln, *Capt.* Rufus, 191.
Lippincott, *Capt.* Richard, 269, 271.
Litchfield, *Conn.*, 123, 125.
Lithgow, *Major* William, 91.
Little, George, 342.
Livingston, *Col.* James, 166, 184–186.
Livingston, Robert R., 407, 408.
Livingston, *Gen.* William, 8.
Livy, Titus, 430.
Lloyd, James, 464.
Lloyd's Neck, proposed attack on, 117.
Loan, proceedings in negotiating a, in Holland, 426.
Long Island, attack on the refugee post on, 227.
Lossberg, *Gen. Baron von*, 269. Regiment of, 33.
Loudon, John Campbell, *4th Earl*, 339.
Louis XVI. *of France*, 378, 409, 428, 442, 459, 462.
Loveberry, ——, 167.
Lovell (Lovewell), John, 339.
Lunt, *Major* Ezra, 239.
Luzerne, Anne César *de la*, 122, 166, 337, 338, 388, 430.
Lycurgus, 325, 377.
Lyman, *Major* Daniel, 266.
Lynch, Thomas, 296.

M.

Macaulay, *Mrs.* Catherine, 327, 356, 399.
McDonald, *British Commissioner*, 464.
McDougall, *Gen.* Alexander, 31, 53, 56, 101, 131, 184, 185, 236, 238, 246, 252, 270, 275. Ordered to command at West Point, 216.
McFall, *Capt.* ——, 101.
Machin, *Capt.* Thomas, 185.
McKean, *Gov.* Thomas, 327, 433, 452, 505, 507. Letter from, to John Adams, 506–508.
Mackintosh, Peter, 404.
McKnight, *Dr.* Charles, 17, 166, 207.
McKonkey's Ferry, 32.
Madison, *Pres.* James, 333, 437, 438.
Magaw, *Col.* Robert, 15, 17, 23.
Magazines to be removed from the seacoast, 51.
Manly, *Com.* John, 63.
Marblehead, 5.
Marbois, François de Barbé, 388, 430. Intercepted letter from, 414, 429.
Maréchaussée, 172, 188.
Marie Antoinette, *Queen of France*, 509.
Maria Theresa *of Austria*, 440.
Marion, *Gen.* Francis, 215.
Markoe, Peter, 464.
"Marquis de la Fayette," *store-ship*, 243.
Marshall, *Capt.* Elihu, 185.
Marshall, *Chief Justice* John, his "Life of Washington," 506.
Martin, *Gov.* Alexander, 332.
Mason, Stephens Thompson, 464.
Massachusetts, Gen. Ward to command in, after Washington's departure, 4. Route of march of troops from, to New Jersey, 45. Able to clothe and arm her troops, 46. Powder due to, 47. Resolve of Congress transmitted to Pres. and Council of, 51. Recruiting in, 52. Number of men still expected from, 219. Pay of troops of, 294. Proposal to appoint officers from other States, 294–296. The people of, eager for separation from Great Britain, 298, 300. Suspension

of courts of justice in, 302, 306–308. Answer of House of Representatives of, to Gov. Hutchinson's speech on the powers of Parliament, 345, 347. Convention to form a Constitution for, 375.
Massachusetts Historical Society, "Proceedings" of, cited, 289.
Massachusetts line in the army, 40, 41, 45, 46, 56–58, 60, 127, 129, 130, 156, 175, 177, 178, 186, 195, 219, 236, 252, 254–256. Officers of the, 116, 127, 141–146, 266. Winter-quarters of the, 1780–81, 172.
Massey, *Gen.* Eyre, 86.
Master, *Capt.* R., 103.
Matlack, Timothy, 326.
Maxwell, *Major* Hugh, 141.
Mayhew, Jonathan, *D.D.*, 356, 365.
Mease, James, 61.
Mediation offered by Germany and Russia, 412, 413, 440–444, 459, 460.
Medical department of the army, 218.
Mifflin, *Gen.* Thomas, 11, 13, 15, 64, 284.
Minot, *Hon.* George Richards, 340.
Money, scarcity of, 230.
Monmouth Court House, battle at, 89.
Monroe, *Pres.* James, 407, 408.
Montaigne, Michel Eyquem *de*, 354.
Montesquieu, Charles de Lecondat, *Baron de*, 324.
Montgomery, *Mrs.* Richard, 437.
Moore, John, 28.
Morris, Gouverneur, 407, 408.
Morris, Robert, 230, 242–244, 247, 266, 461, 507.
Morris, *Col.* Roger, 16, 17.
Morse, Jedediah, *D.D.*, 332.
Morton, John, 327, 432.
Moylan, *Col.* Stephen, 81, 109, 114, 172.
Music, bands of, in the army, 238.

N.

Napier, *Lord*, 82, 83.
Napoleon Bonaparte, 353, 471, 502, 510. Mr. Adams's opinion of, 494.
Nash, *Gen.* Francis, 77.
Nassau, Princes of, see "Orange."
Necker, Jacques, 509.
Needham, Marchmont, 324.
Nelson, *Gov.* Thomas, 351.
Neufville, John *de*, 387, 392.
New Hampshire, resolves of Congress transmitted to Pres. and Council of, 51. Number of militia expected from, 1781, 219.
New Hampshire line in the army, 177, 219. Winter-quarters of the, 1780–81, 172; 1781–82, 220.
New Jersey line in the army, 173, 175, 177, 178, 219. Winter-quarters of the, 1780–81, 171.
New Windsor, 172, 175.
New York, attack on, suggested, 38. Strength of the British army in, 249. Washington asks opinion of his general officers in regard to attack on, for the campaign of 1782, 249–252
New York line in the army, 177, 179, 203. Winter-quarters of the, 1780–81, 171.
Nicholas, *Major* Samuel, 95.
Nifer, Henry, 118.
Niven, *Capt.* Daniel, 201.
Nixon, *Gen.* John, 107, 117–120, 122–124, 133, 135–137.
Nixon, *Col.* Thomas, 65.
North, Frederick, *Lord*, 384.

O.

Officers of the Army, 18, 116, 241, 266. Improper appointments of, 48. Delay of, in marching to the army, 53. Agreement among, to limit price to be paid for certain articles, 108. Memorial of, 116. Promotion of, 116, 121, 129, 141. Relative rank of, 126, 127, 141–146, 224, 236, 252. Commissions for, 127. Staff officers, 149. Supplies of clothing for, 243, 244.
Oliver, *Lieut.-Gov.* Andrew, 343.
Oliver, *Judge* Peter, 344, 346. Anecdote of, 356, 357.
Olmsted, Aaron, 260.
Olney, *Lieut.-Col.* Jeremiah, 200, 240.
Opponents of the Revolution in the colonies, 506.
Orange, Maurice, *Prince of*, 401.
Orange, William of Nassau, *Prince of*, 401.
Orange, William V., *Stadtholder*, 386, 400, 461.
Orange family, devotion of the Dutch people to the, 403–406.
Orangeburg, *So. Car.*, capture of, 214.
Ordnance, arrival of, at Portsmouth, 43, 44, 46. Arrival of, from France, 50. To be moved from the coast, 51, 52.
Oswald, Richard, 279, 426, 444.
Otis, *Col.* James, 324, 357, 359, 462.
Otis, James, 317, 324, 340, 355–357, 365, 463, 474, 485, 487.
Otis, Samuel Alleyne, 93, 94, 157.
Otis and Andrew, *Messrs.*, 93.
Otis and Hanley, *Messrs.*, 157.
Ottendorf, N. D., 90.
Oxenstiern, *Count* Axel, 446.

P.

Paine, Robert Treat, 342, 345, 505.
Paine, Thomas, 326, 376, 395. His "Common Sense," 298.
Painter, *Major* Elisha, 151.

Palfrey, *Col.* William, 25, 60.
Parke, John, 6.
Parker, *Lieut.* Elias, 258.
Parliament, resistance to the claim of, to tax the colonies, a principle of the Revolution, 340, 341. Answer of the Massachusetts House of Representatives to Gov. Hutchinson's speech on the powers of, 346, 347.
Parsons, *Gen.* Samuel Holden, 15, 17, 25, 28, 64, 107, 109, 110, 117, 119, 126, 189, 196, 197, 199.
Pasquin, see "Williams, John."
Patterson, *Gen.* John, 26, 47, 75, 92, 144, 178, 241, 247, 253.
Pattison, *Gen.* James, 184.
Paulding, *Major* Jonathan Horton, 207.
Paulus Hook, capture of, 118.
Pawling, *Lieut.-Col.* Levi, 135.
Paxton, Charles, 340.
Pay of the army, 238, 239, 295.
Paymasters, 116.
Peabody, *Lieut.* Ebenezer, 154.
Peace, Commission to Adams and others, to negotiate a treaty of, 457–459.
Peekskill, instructions to Gen. Heath, on assuming command at, 19–22. Attack on, 43.
Penn, William, 438.
Pennsylvania line in the army, 175. Winter-quarters of the, 1780–81, 171.
Penobscot, proposed attack on a British force at the, 281, 282.
Perkins, *Major* William, 160.
Peter the Great *of Russia*, 502.
Peter, Saint, *Apostle*, 478.
Peter Leopold, *Grand Duke of Tuscany*, 440.
Peters, *Major* Andrew, 141.
Pettingill, *Major* Joseph, 254, 263.
Phalaris, 394.
Phelps, Oliver, 201, 214, 249.
Philadelphia, occupied by Howe, 75. Evacuation of, 88.
Phillips, *Col.* Frederick, 271, 273.
Phillips, *Gen.* William, 89 *n.*, 91, 103, 104.
Phinney, *Col.* Edmund, 62.
Pickens, *Gen.* Andrew, 215.
Pickering, *Col.* Timothy, 193, 232, 239, 241, 508.
Pierce, John, 150.
Pinckney, Charles, 352.
Pitt, William, *Earl of Chatham*, 369.
Plunder, distribution of, 36.
"Politique des Cabinets," 414, 429.
Pollard, *Lieut.-Col.* Jonathan, 87.
Pond, *Ensign* Enoch, 89.
Poor, *Gen.* Enoch, 26, 41, 136, 147, 154.
Pope, Alexander, 478, 479, 494.
Pope, *Capt.* Isaac (?), 208.
Popkin, *Lieut.-Col.* John, 263.
Porcupine, see "Cobbett, William."
Porter, *Col.* Elisha, 26, 28.
Porter, *Major* John, 199, 240, 242, 274.
Porter, *Ensign* ——, 147.
Powder, made in Massachusetts, 49. Mill at Andover, 304.
Pray, *Capt.* John, 248, 255, 257, 262.
President of the United States, question as to title by which he should be addressed, 437.
Priestley, *Rev.* Joseph, 435.
Prince, *Rev.* Thomas, 356.
Prisoners, American, returned, 55. Exchange of, 79, 82, 83, 87. Escape of, 121. At Fishkill, 193.
Pritchard, *Capt.* Thomas, 186.
Privateering, 69, 75, 159, 313, 323.
Providence, *R. I.*, attempt to cast cannon at, 298, 300, 304.
Provisions for the army, 169, 170, 180, 182, 183, 187, 188, 201, 205, 209, 218, 227, 228, 230, 233. Scarcity of, 146, 148, 153, 178, 179, 263. Abuses in the issue of, 189, 193. Gen. Heath sent to New England to solicit supplies of, 209–212.
Putnam, *Gen.* Israel, 10, 64, 131.
Putnam, *Gen.* Rufus, 11, 19, 53, 65, 148, 260, 267, 279.

Q.

Quakers, 506. Monarchical in their views, 474.
Quartermaster - General's department, 146, 189, 190, 193, 205.
Queries of Congress in regard to raising an army, 3, 4. Of Washington, on the policy of attacking New York, 249–252.
Quincy, Josiah, *Jr.*, 487.

R.

Radcliffe, *Mrs.* Anne, 494.
Rahl, *Col.* ——, 33.
Rank of officers of the army, 126, 127, 141–146, 224, 236, 252.
Rawdon, *Lord* Francis, 214. Captured by De Grasse, 220.
Raynal, Guillaume Thomas François, *Abbé*, 468, 469.
Rayneval, Gérard *de*, 442. Note to, from John Adams, 443.
Read, George, 507.
Read, William, 303.
Recruiting service, 23, 25, 35, 37, 42, 52, 157, 199, 200, 208, 213, 214, 254, 256, 258, 276, 278.
Reed, *Col.* James, 26.
Reed, Thomas, *paymaster*, 147, 150–152.
Reid, *Col.* George, 236.
Reid, *Major* ——, 189, 191, 198, 199.
Rembrandt van Ryn, Paul Harmens, 477.
Republican form of government, first stipulated for in the Constitution of

the United States, 352. John Adams's idea of a, 353. The Dutch idea of a, an aristocracy, 400.
Republicanism, 473. An indefinite term, 431, 432, 450, 451.
Rhode Island, expedition to, 1777, 78.
Rhode Island line in the army, winter-quarters of the, 1780–81, 172.
Richards, Oliver, 195, 196.
Richards, *Commissary at Litchfield, Conn.*, 125.
Riedesel, *Baron* Friedrich Adolph *von*, 103.
Rizimbarac, John, 118.
Robespierre, Maximilian Marie Isidor *de*, 399.
Robinson's (Beverley) Farm, 274.
Robinson's (Beverley) Ferry, 141.
Robinson's (Beverley) Mills, 177.
Robinson's (Beverley) Stores, 106.
Robinson, *Lieut.* Thomas, 276.
Rochambeau, Jean Baptiste Donatien Vimeur, *Comte de*, 163, 294, 269.
Rochefoucauld, see "La Rochefoucauld."
Rodney, Cæsar, 507.
Ross, George, 507.
Rubens, Peter Paul, 477.
Ruggles, *Gen.* Timothy, 340.
Rush, Benjamin, *M.D.*, 332, 506, 507.
Russell, *Col.* Giles, 129.
Russell, *Lady* Rachel, 422.
Russell, *Lord* William, 422.
Russia, mediation offered by the Empress of, 412, 413, 440–444, 459, 460.
Rutledge, Edward, 312.
Rutledge, John, 350.

S.

St. Clair, *Gen.* Arthur, 51, 65, 66, 68.
St. John's River, proposed secret expedition to the, 68.
Saltpetre, made in Massachusetts, 297, 300. Bounty on the manufacture of, 304, 306.
Saltonstall, *Gen.* Gurdon, 17.
Sands, Comfort, 244, 256, 266, 267.
Sands & Co., *Messrs.*, 243, 265, 276. Referees appointed in the dispute between, and Gen. Heath's army, 267, 268.
Sargent, *Col.* Paul Dudley, 17.
Sartine, Antoine Raymond Jean Gualbert Gabriel *de*, 409.
Savannah, *Ga.*, 131.
Scammel, *Col.* Alexander, 151, 192, 220. Wounded at Yorktown, 223.
Scott, *Gen.* John Morin, 15, 17, 25.
Schuyler, *Gen.* Philip, 41, 45, 61, 63, 65–67, 170, 177, 240, 244, 245, 247.
Sedgwick, Theodore, 488.
Selden, John, his "Judicature in Parliament," 345.
Sergeant, Nathaniel Peaslee, 313.
Sever, Nicholas, 357.
Sever, William, 46.
Sewall, *Chief Justice* Stephen, 340.
Shaw, *Major* Francis, 29.
Shays, Daniel, 335, 473.
Shea, *Col.* Jonathan, 15, 17.
Sheldon, *Col.* Elisha, 80, 167, 172, 232, 241, 251.
Shepard, *Col.* William, 116, 200.
Sherman, *Col.* Isaac, 129, 198.
Shippen, William, 354.
Shirley, *Gov.* William, 339.
Sidney, Algernon, 324.
Signals for alarming the country, 139.
Sigourney and Ingraham, *Messrs.*, 391.
Silliman, *Col.* Gold Selleck, 15.
Simmons, *Capt.* ——, 207.
Smart, *Capt.* ——, 194.
Smith, James, 507.
Smith, Melancthon, 267, 268.
Smith, *Sir* Thomas, 324.
Smith, *Chief Justice* William, 271–273.
Smith, *Col.* William Stephens, 504.
Snow, *Lieut.* ——, 154.
"Society for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts," 506.
Soldier's Fortune, 172.
Solon, 325, 377.
Southampton, Thomas Wriothesley, *Earl of*, 422.
South Carolina, successes of the American army in, 214, 215.
Spain, arrival of clothing from, 213.
Sparks, Jared, *LL.D.*, his "Life and Writings of Washington," cited, 172*n*.
Spaulding, *Major*, see "Paulding, *Major* Jonathan H."
Spencer, Hazelton, 169.
Spencer, *Gen.* Joseph, 39. His claim for pay, 63, 64.
Spencer, *Col.* Oliver, 166, 183, 185, 186.
Spenser, Edmund, 478.
Springfield, arms and stores to be removed from the sea-coast to, 50–52. A depot for stores, 73.
Sproat, *Col.* Ebenezer, 196, 199.
Stacy, Joseph, 88.
Stadtholder, attachment of the people of Holland to the office of, 400–406.
Staël-Holstein, Anna Lovisa Germaine, *Baronne de*, 509.
Staël-Holstein, Erik Magnus, *Baron de*, 509.
Staff officers, 149.
Stamp Act, 341.
Standish, *Capt.* Miles, 339.
Stark, *Gen.* John, 26, 233.
Steuben, Frederick William, *Baron von*, 82, 253, 263.
Stewart, *Col.* Charles, 149, 263.
Stirling, William Alexander, *Lord*, 63, 100, 121, 247.
Stockbridge, David, 342.
Stockbridge Indians, offer of, to serve for part of a campaign, 219, 220.
Stockton, Richard, 467.

Stony Point, 126, 128, 130, 135. Capture of, 111. Works on, 128.
Strang, Daniel, 29.
Sullivan, *Capt.* Ebenezer, 62.
Sullivan, Francis Stoughton, 324.
Sullivan, *Gov.* James, 437, 439.
Sullivan, *Gen.* John, 64, 131.
Sulphur, 306. Manufacture of, 298, 300, 304.
Sumner, *Capt.* I., 191.
Sumpter, *Gen.* Thomas, 214.
Surgeons, pay of regimental, 50.
Swazey, *Major* Joseph, 84, 143.
Swift, *Col.* Heman, 259.

T.

Tacitus, Caius Cornelius, 430.
Tallmadge, *Col.* Benjamin, 108, 162.
Tash, *Col.* Thomas, 20.
Taunton, courts of justice interfered with in, 307.
Taylor, George, 507.
Taylor, Joshua, 196, 200.
Ternay, Charles Louis d'Arsac *de*, 161.
Thacher, Oxenbridge, 324, 340, 355.
Thompson, *Gen.* William, 79. 87.
Thomson, Charles, 379, 380, 383, 385, 459, 460.
Thornton, Matthew, 507.
Thou (Thuanus), Jacques Auguste *de*, 463.
Throop, *Major* Benjamin, 133.
Thucydides, 430.
Ticonderoga, 40, 42, 43, 46, 48, 51, 65–67, 70.
Titles, discussion as to the, to be given the President of the United States, 437. Mr. Adams on the utility of, 458, 459. Fondness of the Americans for, *ib.*
Tories, 36, 506.
Torrey, *Major* Joseph, 176.
Trenton, Washington's account of the battle of, 32–34.
Trowbridge, Edmund, 345, 439.
Trumbull, *Gov.* Jonathan, 18, 27, 30, 55, 125, 183, 188, 200, 205.
Trumbull, *Col.* Jonathan, *Jr.*, 273.
Tupper, *Col.* Benjamin, 169, 208.
"Turf-lifters" in Holland, 404.
Turgot, Anne Robert Jacques, 326.
Turner, *Dr.* Philip, 108.

U.

Union, sentiment of, in the colonies, 301, 302, 310.
United States, title to be given to the President of the, 437. Ministers from the, not received at any European court, 440.
Utrecht, revolution in, 402.

V.

Van Berckel, Engelbert Francis, 387, 388, 391, 401.
Van der Capellen de March, *Baron*, 386.
Van der Capellen de Pol, *Baron*, 386, 402, 403.
Vandyck, *Sir* Anthony, 477.
Van Heukelem, *Mr.* ——, *of Leyden*, 403.
Van Schaick, *Col.* Gozen, 152.
Van Staphorst, *Messrs.* Nicolas and Jacob, 392, 416.
Varick, *Col.* Richard, 165, 173, 236, 246.
Varnum, *Gen.* James Mitchell, 64.
Vattel, Emmerich *de*, 324.
Vaughan, *Gen. Sir* John, 26.
Vauguyon, *Duc de la*, 388, 441, 442.
Vergennes, Charles Gravier, *Comte de*, 381, 397, 407–409, 411–416, 420, 423, 427, 428, 430, 442–444, 455, 462. Proposes that the United States should pay coin to French holders of their paper money, 412. Difficulties of Adams with, and Franklin, 427, 428. A letter from Adams to, quoted, 441. Desired to separate the United States from all European powers except France, 444, 445.
Vermont, treasonable correspondence with Canada, 232.
Verplanck's Point, 114, 115, 118, 119, 120, 135.
Vice-President, duties of the, 475, 476.
Vienna, Congress at, 443.
Vienne, *Marquis de*, see "De Vienne."
Vioménil, Antoine Charles du Houx, *Baron de*, 226.
Virginia, operations in, 1781, 214.
Vischer, Carel Wouter, 392.
Voltaire, François Marie Arouet *de*, 396.
Vose, *Lieut.-Col.* Elisha, 144.
Vose, *Col.* Joseph, 28, 88, 144, 198, 283.

W.

Wadsworth, *Gen.* James, 15, 35.
Wadsworth, *Col.* Jeremiah, 91.
Wales, Ebenezer, 239.
Wales and Davis, *Messrs.*, 239.
War of 1812, 501, 502, 505. 508.
Ward, *Gen.* Artemas, 47, 303, 305. To assume the command in Massachusetts after Washington's departure, 4. Instructions issued to, 4–8.
Ward, *Col.* Joseph, 17.
Ward, Samuel, 483.
Warner, *Gen.* Seth, 196.
Warren, *Gen.* James, 296, 303, 313, 317, 318, 324, 327, 328, 333, 335, 336, 341, 342, 346, 395, 419, 431, 432, 449, 451, 463, 476–478, 481, 482, 485, 488, 494, 495, 498, 500. Extract from a letter of John Adams to, 399.
Warren, *Gen.* Joseph, 293, 347.

Warren, *Mrs.* Mercy, publication of her History of the American Revolution, 318. John Adams's quarrel with, 319–511. Her rejoinder to Mr. Adams's defence of the charge of inclination to monarchical principles, 358–363; to his attack on her motives, 364. Her defence of Gen. Warren, 365, 366. Replies to Mr. Adams's criticism of her account of his ministry in Holland, 394–398. Her definition of republicanism, 398. Quotes Mr. Adams's earlier opinion of her talents, 399. Replies to Mr. Adams's criticisms; on his commissions to Holland and England, 417; on his fondness for the Dutch people, 418. Shows that Mr. Laurens had a commission, 419. Gives reasons for thinking Mr. Adams unsuited to court life, 420. Quotes an early letter of his, 422. Accuses him of vanity and jealousy, 423. Defends her "History," 424. Answers Mr. Adams's criticisms on her "History," 447–457. Denies that she has impeached his honesty or character, 448. His vanity, 449. Republicanism an indefinite term, 450, 451. Reiterates the charges of monarchical leanings, 451. Speaks of Hamilton and Burr, 452. Remarks on titles, 453, 454. On Francis Dana, 454, 455. Her poor health, 456. Her final reply to Mr. Adams's letters, 479–491. Denies that she has charged him with any immorality, 480. Allusion to one of her poems, *ib.* His views of persons and events not always the same, *ib.*, 484, 488. Indignant refutation of the charge that Gen. Warren desired the office of collector of Plymouth, 481. Early services of the Warrens in Mr. Adams's behalf, 482, 483. His early letters cited, *ib.* Her son, 483. Denies being concerned in any intrigue against Mr. Adams, 486. Quotes his different opinions, at different times, of Messrs. King and Sedgwick, 487, 488; of Franklin, 489. Her "History," 489, 490. Letters from Mrs. Adams to, 493–495, 501, 502. Letters from Elbridge Gerry to, 495–498, 501, 504. Mr. Gerry's observations on the correspondence with Mr. Adams, 496–498. Mr. Gerry acts as a mediator, 499, 500. Tokens of friendship exchanged with Mr. and Mrs. Adams, 502, 503. Letter from, to Mrs. Adams, 503. Letters to, from John Adams, 504–506, 508, 509. Letter from, to Mr. Adams, 509–511. Her "Group," 509, 510. Her death, 511*n*.

See also "Adams, John."

Warren, Winslow, 502 *n*.

Warren, *Mrs.* ——, house of, *at West Point*, 168.

Washington, *Pres.* George, 297, 313, 318, 334, 377, 437–439, 452, 454, 469, 476, 508. Letters of, to General Heath and others, 3–285. Asking opinion on organization of army, 3, 4. Instructions to General Ward on his taking command of the troops left in Massachusetts, 4–8. Orders Heath at Kingsbridge to detach troops towards New York, 9, 10. Prepares for the landing of the enemy at Hunt's Point, 11. Directs Heath and Clinton to gain intelligence of the enemy, 12. Requests an interview with the general officers, 13. Recommends destruction of roads leading to Kingsbridge, 14. Promises reinforcements to Heath, 15. Takes measures for relief of the sick, 17. Concerning the choice of officers, 18. Directs Heath to guard the passes of the Highlands, 19–22. Concerning recruiting for the army, 25. Announces the capture of Fort Washington, *ib.* Orders Heath to move towards Morristown, 25. Critical situation of the army, 26. Orders Heath to join Lee, 27; to return to New York State, 28. Requests troops for the defence of Philadelphia, 29, 31. Gives an account of the battle of Trenton, 32–34. Approves sentence of a court-martial, 36. Declines to interfere in the case of Lady Johnson, 37. Concerning a proposed attack on Long Island, 38. Recommends the removal of forage to the interior, 39. Orders Massachusetts levies to Ticonderoga, 40–42. A force to be collected at Peekskill, 40, 42, 43. In regard to Major Austin, 44. Delays in marching the new levies, 45. Concerning powder due to Massachusetts, 47. The case of M. Faneuil, 49. In regard to powder, *ib.* Designates Springfield as a place for magazines, 50. Transmits resolve to Congress in reference to attack on Ticonderoga, 51. In regard to delays of officers in marching the new levies, 53. Asks that Col. Putnam may aid the engineers at Peekskill, *ib.* Concerning depots for public stores, and guards for the same, 54. Refuses applications for artillery, 55. Pay of returned prisoners, *ib.* Continental currency, 56. Inquires into irregularities in the distribution of clothing, 58, 59, 61. His distress for want of troops, 60. The only command separate from his was Gen. Gates's, 63, 64. Announces St. Clair's evacuation of Ticonderoga, 65. Not in favor of secret expedition to Canada, 68. Discourages all French applications for service except those made to agents in France, 69. Opinion of, on the evacuation of Ticonderoga, 70.

Conjectures as to Gen. Howe's plans, 71, 72. The elaboratory at Springfield, 73. Orders Heath to hasten despatch of troops, 74. Philadelphia falls into Howe's hands, 75. Gives an account of the battle of Germantown, 76. Advises Heath not to expedite the departure of the Convention troops, 77. Not consulted in regard to an expedition to Rhode Island, 78. Concerning the commissary's department, 79. Exchanges of Gen. Burgoyne's officers, *ib.* Introduces Major Blackden, 80. Introduces Capt. Hopkins, 81. Gen. Heath to be guided by Congress in reference to Gen. Burgoyne's army, 82. Informs Gen. Heath of the alliance with France, 85. Concerning exchange of prisoners, 87. Informs Gen. Heath of battle of Monmouth court-house, 89. Declines to decide a question in regard to the Convention troops, 91. Concerning clothing for the army, 92–94. Militia assembled to defend Boston may be disbanded, 96. Introduces Gen. Du Portail, 98. Authorizes Gen. Heath to grant discharges to officers, 99. If British fleet appear off Boston, Gen. Gates is to be at once notified, 101. Concerning the removal of the Convention troops, 103. Requests Gen. Heath to prepare to join the army, 105, 106. Orders troops into Connecticut, 109. Announces the capture of Stony Point, 111. Desires information as to the works at Verplanck's Point, 114. A defensive work to be built in the gorge of the mountains, 115. Concerning the rank of officers in the Massachusetts line, 116. Proposed attempt on Lloyd's Neck, 117. Announces capture of Paulus Hook, 118. Commends spirit of enterprise in the army, 119. Gives directions to prepare for a move on the part of the enemy, 120. Concerning rank of officers of the Connecticut line, 122. Orders Heath to send an officer to New London for news of the French fleet, 124, 125. On rank of officers of the line, 126. On commissions for Massachusetts officers, 127. Willing to grant furloughs, 130. Refuses Gen. Heath's application for leave, 131. Forced to act as clothier-general, 132. Concerning winter quarters, 134, 135. Instructions issued to Heath on assigning him to command of posts on the North River, 136–140. Gives an opinion on the relative rank of Majors Hull and Cogswell, 141–146. Directs the paymaster to remove from Albany to West Point, 147. Concerning the distribution of clothing, 149. Concerning a letter of one Bostwick, 151. A scarcity of provisions, 153. Asks for a return of the number of the Massachusetts troops, 156. Concerning recruiting and bounty, 157, 158. Communicates intelligence of Gen. Henry Clinton's movements, 161, 162. Orders a court of inquiry on officers of Arnold's staff, 165. Posts near West Point to be kept free of superfluous stores, *ib.* Concerning supplies for the Highland posts, 167, 170, 171. Issues instructions for the winter quarters of 1780–81, 171–173. Orders Heath to send a strong foraging party to White Plains, 174, 175. Various arrangements for winter quarters made, 176–179. Opinion of, in the case of Major Reid, 180, 181. Asks for plans of boats desired by Gov. Jefferson, 182. Advises a foraging party for Westchester County, 184. Concerning a dispute between Heath and the quartermaster-general, 189, 190. Settles the disputed question between Heath and the quartermaster-general, 193, 194. On discharge of soldiers, 195. Confirms sentences of courts martial, 196, 197. Names field officers for a detachment to be sent to Virginia, 197, 198. Urges Heath to secure West Point during the absence of the detachment, 198. On the poor quality of recruits, 199, 200. On the supplies at West Point, 201. On inoculation, 203. Concerning supplies of provisions, 205. On the Convention troops, 209. Directs Gen. Heath to make personal application for supplies to the New England States, 209. Instructions for Heath's mission to the New England States, 210–212. Urges recruiting, 213, 214. Communicates news of successes in South Carolina, 214, 215. Issues instructions to Gen. McDougall on giving him command at West Point, 216, 217. Complains of silence of the Governor of Massachusetts, 217. Orders Heath to rejoin the army, 218. Refers the application of the Stockbridge Indians to Heath, 219. Requests supplies for the army in Virginia to be sent from West Point, 221. Communicates various events in the siege of Yorktown, 222–226. Surrender of Cornwallis, 228. Makes arrangements for winter-quarters of the army, 228–230. Asks for a return of the number of men in Heath's command, 231. Communicates resolve of Congress thanking troops that served at Yorktown, 232. Denies the power of a State to discharge soldiers, 235. Concerning inoculation, 237. Proposes to issue a proclamation pardoning deserters who will return to the army, 239. Directs Gen. Heath to forward returns of troops to the legislatures

of the New England States, 240. Concerning officers' rations, 241. Communicates the agreement made with Messrs. Sands & Co., in regard to supplies of clothing, 243. An early campaign desirable, 245. Visit of, to North River, 248. Asks the opinion of the general officers in reference to the campaign of 1782, 249–252. Directions in regard to provisions, 255. Complains of the quality of the recruits, 256. Forbids flags of truce being received except at Dobbs Ferry, 257. Instructions concerning flags, 260, 261. Concerning deserters, 263. Declines to interfere in the matter of forage used by the French army, 264. Concerning a misunderstanding between Gen. Heath and Col. Putnam, 266, 267. Arbitrators appointed to settle the dispute between the army and the contractors, 267, 268. Visits Philadelphia to see Count Rochambeau, 269. Appoints Gen. Heath to meet a British officer of equal rank in relation to the court-martial of Capt. Lippencott, 271. Instructions to Heath, 271–273. Directs Gen. Heath to notify the British that all flags sent by other routes than Dobbs Ferry will be detained as prisoners, 275. Grants leave of absence to Gen. Heath, *ib.* Refuses it to Gen. Knox, 277. Perfect harmony between the French and American soldiers, 279. The winter of 1782–83, 280. His views in reference to the enemy's force at Penobscot, 281, 282. Necessity of obtaining intelligence of the enemy's movements, 284. Chief Justice Marshall's "Life" of, 506.
Watertown, 6.
Watson, *Capt.* Titus, 121, 122, 126.
Wayne, *Gen.* Anthony, 48, 111.
Webb, *Capt.* George, 220.
Webb, *Gen.* Samuel B., 38, 82, 199.
Weeks, Reuben, 167.
Weissenfels, Frederick H., *Baron*, 164.
Welles, *Capt.* R., 187, 199.
Weltner, *Col.* Lodwick, 185.
Wentworth, Paul, 387.
West Point, *N. Y.*, 136–138, 147, 164, 168, 171, 193, 198, 199, 228, 229, 232, 253, 255. Fire in the barracks at, 150, 154. Supply of meat and flour at, 201. Chain across the river at, *ib.* The invalid corps to form part of the garrison at, 215. Gen. McDougall ordered to command, 216. Garrison at, 259. See "Heath, William."
Whitcomb, *Gen.* John, 62.
White, *Capt.* ——, 177.
White Plains, *N. Y.*, 174, 175.
Whittlesey, Chauncy, 132.
Wilkinson, *Gen.* James, 131.
William III. of *England*, 401.
Williams, *Capt.* Edward Payson (?), 266, 267.
Williams, John M. (Pasquin), 464.
Williams, *Gen.* Otho Holland, 16.
Williams, *Lieut.* Robert, 151.
Willett, *Col.* Marinus, 231.
Willing, Thomas, 507.
Willink, *Messrs.* Wilhem & Jan, 416.
Willis, *Capt.*, see "Welles, *Capt.* R."
Winslip, *Ensign* ——, 83.
Winter-quarters of the American army, 1779–80, 120, 125–140; 1780–81, 171, 172; 1781–82, 228, 229.
Winthrop, *Madam* Hannah, 361.
Winthrop, *Col.* John, 289.
Winthrop, *Prof.* John, *LL.D.*, 289, 290, 344, 357, 359, 365. Correspondence between, and John Adams, 291–313. His account of the battle of Bunker Hill, 292–294. Describes the evacuation of Boston, 296, 297. Urges the fortification of Boston harbor, 297–303. Eager for a declaration of independence, 298, 306. Letter of, on the interruptions of the courts of justice in Massachusetts, 306–308. His views on the conference with Gen. Howe, 312–313.
Winthrop, Samuel, 296, 299, 303.
Winthrop, William, 296, 299, 301, 303, 305.
Witherspoon, John, *D.D.*, 467.
Wolfe, *Gen.* James, 340.
Wood, John, 464.
Woodbridge, *Major* John, 257.
Woodford, *Gen.* William, 107, 135.
Worcester, 6. Selected as a depot for prisoners, 54.
Writs of assistance, 340.
Wyllis, *Major* ——, 198.
Wythe, George, 326.

Y.

Yorke, *Sir* Joseph, 387.
Yorktown, *Va.*, siege of, 223–226. Surrender of Cornwallis at, 228.
Young, Thomas, 326.

Z.

Zoilus, 364.

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